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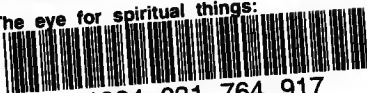
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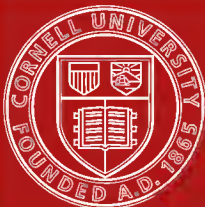
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THE EYE FOR SPIRITUAL  
THINGS



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EYE FOR SPIRITUAL  
THINGS

*And Other Sermons*

BY

HENRY MELVILL GWATKIN, M.A.

DIXIE PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY  
AND FELLOW OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE  
D.D., AND LATE GIFFORD LECTURER, EDINBURGH

IMPORTED BY  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
NEW YORK





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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THESE are scattered words on many subjects ; but their central thought is this.

Christ our Saviour came to destroy nothing at all, save the works of the devil. The knowledge of God is not to be earned by sacrificing reason to feeling, or feeling to reason, by ascetic observance or by orthodox belief : it is given freely to all that purify themselves with all the force of heart, and soul, and mind. Further, the only power that can bring feeling, thought, and will into harmonious action is the personal influence of Christ—which St. Paul sums up in faith. From that personal influence all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed, though the doers be those who never heard His name ; and to its transfiguring power, if it be rightly received, no limit can be set even in this life.

CAMBRIDGE, *February 8, 1906.*



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**I.**  
**THE EYE FOR SPIRITUAL**  
**THINGS.**



“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”—Ps. xix. 1.

## I.

### THE EYE FOR SPIRITUAL THINGS.<sup>1</sup>

IS there one among you who never looks up with admiration to the silent splendour of the mid-night sky? Its grandeur awed primæval nations, and still fascinates the most cultured. One generation cometh, and another goeth; and still those glittering stars pursue their course from year to year and century to century. With them seems neither change nor shadow of turning. The stars that looked on David look on us, and will look on the earth when thousands of ages shall be past. And their sound is gone out into all lands, for there is neither speech nor language where their voices are not heard. Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades light one country; to another are revealed the chambers of the south. They are splendid even in this murky North of ours; but to the mountains and the desert they shew their fullest glory blazing from a crystal sky. Small wonder if men of old time were "driven to worship" stars that glowed like lamps in heaven.

And if we are ourselves in no danger of falling

<sup>1</sup> University of Cambridge, December 8, 1895.

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into star-worship, the reason is not that the old heavens have lost their grandeur in these latter days. We know what our fathers never knew—that these twinkling points of light are suns like our sun, and many of them hundreds of times brighter than our own sun; that the measured distance of the very nearest of them utterly beggars imagination; and that for every star we see with our eyes there are thousands in the ethereal deeps of space around them. Yet many a time our lines have measured them, our balances have weighed them, our spectroscopes have shewn what they are made of, and our analysis has laid its hand on stars that no man to this day has seen.

But where is he that made them all? Where is he that created the heavens, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in? He is the Lord our God, the Lord of Hosts is his name. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. If there is any one thing which all nations in all ages have thought manifest, it is the eternal power and divinity revealed from the sky. And yet there are men who tell us that they can see no God in heaven. They say that they have asked, and had no answer; sought, but never found. Fools we might answer according to their folly; but it is not always the fool that hath said in his heart, There is no God. Some of these men are no triflers, but acute and earnest seekers after truth, and we shall be the fools ourselves if we neglect their words. Yet they

have searched every corner of the sky, and never seen our God in it. The heavens, they say, declare the glory of Kepler and Newton, but not the glory of God.

Why is this? Why cannot they see what seems so plain to others? Their eyes are as good as ours, and not a star that we can see escapes them. Is the voice of the ages a delusion, or is the mistake in the last word of science?

In one sense the question is not for us an open one. If we know God for ourselves, we can as soon deny the sun that shines in the heavens as the light that shines in our hearts; so that if others cannot see him, we are forced to conclude that there is something wrong with them. But if we say this, we are doubly bound to shew where the mistake is.

Two things then are needed for seeing. We must have not only something to see, but eyes to see it with. We need training as much for spiritual as for scientific truth. Just as the astronomer's trained eye sees wreaths of cloud and glimmering points of light where we see nothing but darkness, so the man of God sees wreathing splendours round him, and glimmerings of mystery to which the natural man is blind. The keenest eye can only see what it has the proper power to see. Some of us are blind to one colour, some to another, and some to all colours; and there are vibrations which none of us can see as light at all. So it is with spiritual things. One

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of us catches one tint, another another, some none at all; and there must be many a glorious colour that is waiting for an eye which can see it.

Two things, said a great philosopher, fill me with awe—Conscience within me, and the starlit sky without. These two things are not connected together by accident. If the inner sense is wanting, the outward eyes and ears will see and hear in vain. If a voice from heaven came to us, some would say it thundered. If a spirit passed before our face, it would but speak some truism that we knew before. If we saw creation with our eyes, we should call it spontaneous generation. You will not see God in earth or heaven till you have seen him in your heart. You may see him indeed with other men's eyes, and hear of him with the hearing of the ear; but you will never know him for yourself, however sound and orthodox your parrot-cries may be. The knowledge of God is not to the wise, nor yet to the men of understanding, but to them that seek him with all their heart and all their soul as well as all their mind. Understanding and learning are good gifts, though devils might have them, and human devils often have had them. There was a good deal of both in that earthly hell, the artistic age of Italy. But they are gifts whose value depends on the use we make of them. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that lays himself out heart and soul and mind for selfish pleasure, selfish pleasure shall he have, and the curse of emptiness that goes

with it. And he that lays himself out heart and soul and mind to find truth, as some of these men do, truth shall he find, and its blessing with it. Only if scientific truth is all that he is looking for, he must not expect to pick up spiritual truth by the wayside. The knowledge of spiritual truth no more comes of itself than his knowledge of scientific truth came of itself. He can have them both if he pleases—there is nothing to hinder—but not unless he lays himself out for both. It is true that the two searches have a great deal in common, for the one is far more scientific, the other far more spiritual than their narrower votaries imagine. Still they are not the same, and the one will not do duty for the other.

If serious men tell us that the heavens declare no God to them, I am perfectly willing to believe them. I make no charge of any sort against them; only I say that they are going to work the wrong way. It is not the simpletons only that have seen a God in heaven, but many of the brightest and best of the children of men. Even science can shew us no such mighty cloud of witnesses, of those who speak of that they know. If our friends cannot see what these have seen, let them seriously bethink themselves whether they understand all the terms of the question, before they take upon them to set aside our answer. It may be they have not well considered how serious a matter is the search for God. They have acuteness and learning, diligence and candour:



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what lack they yet? The answer is that as spiritual knowledge covers a wider range than scientific, the search for it will call for wider powers. The man of God is much the better for acuteness and learning, and can do nothing at all without diligence and candour; but these are not all that he needs.

The broad difference of spiritual from scientific knowledge is that it has to do with a living God, and not with lifeless matter, and therefore appeals to the whole man, not chiefly to the reason. This is what we mean by saying that there is no spiritual knowledge without faith. But let there be no mistake here. It is not faith to receive truth itself as a mere *corpus* of doctrine from others, much less to profess our firm belief of what we think in our hearts is most likely to turn out false. The unseen is the realm of faith, not the unreasonable. Neither is faith the mere assurance of salvation, which may be no better than the assurance of Ignorance at the gate of the celestial city. But neither again is faith to be limited to things which science can discover. If our knowledge of mere life is limited in every direction, not only by scientific difficulties, but by deeper psychological mysteries which there is no reason to suppose that science will ever penetrate, surely it is idle to fancy that reason alone can fully explore the mystery of mysteries that underlies the rest. Faith is a manifold thing. It has a purely natural side of mere belief, which is strictly scientific

in appealing to reason, and calling for proof suited to the question in hand. And there is no faith unless this side is satisfied. The faith which scorns to pass through the gate of reason is none of our faith. The Lord himself never asked for blind belief, and the disciple is not above his master. All that churches or councils can do is to bear witness of their own belief and experience. They have no peculiar commission to discover truth, no peculiar inspiration to declare its meaning. Their decisions are as fallible as others, and it is not less unspiritual than unscientific and untruthful to accept them without regard to evidence.

So then, if reason bars the way, we can go no further. Whatever is clearly contrary to reason, like some common theories of the Lord's Supper, is plainly self-condemned. Only we must be sure that reason does bar the way. Much that we cannot fully explain, like the Incarnation, is not only not contrary to reason, but absolutely true to the deepest needs and instincts of human nature. It belongs not to the unreasonable, but to the unforeseen.

If now we can pass on to the spiritual side of faith, we find it complex. As reverence, trust, and love are the answer of the whole man to the love of men, so faith is the answer of the whole man to the love of God. Of the whole man, not of the reason only, or even chiefly. It is not the cold assent of reason, as to some scientific fact which has nothing to

do with our inner life. It is not the pale radiance of æsthetic admiration, playing idly round some human Christ who never rose with power from the dead. It is not the passing heat of spiritual excitement, which is quickly raised and as quickly dies away. It is the stedfast fire of love divine, which alone has power to fuse together the whole complex of heart and soul and mind in a glowing flame of love to him that loveth us, and with his own blood loosed us from our sins.

Faith is the beginning, and faith is the end of spiritual knowledge. And faith is not a peculiar mystery of Christian orthodoxy. By their fruits ye shall know them; and many a misbeliever brings forth fruits of the Spirit in love and gentleness and temperance, though joy and peace may never visit him. There is true faith according to its kind in every work that is done on the face of the wide earth for the sake of love and duty, back to the Three Hundred in the pass, and down to the child in the slums who shares his last coppers with one who needs them more than he. In every nation he has faith who feareth God and worketh righteousness, for he is accepted with him. And the man that walketh in darkness and hath no light—if only he walks uprightly and judges righteous judgment, he too shall see the mystery of the truth and duty that he loved unfolded in the loving face of him that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore.

"And judges righteous judgment," I said. This is the question for the sceptic, and he must not evade it merely because we may not ask him to his face. I took him at his best, and meant it for no empty compliment. He is acute and learned, diligent and candid. So far as reason goes, his work is perfect. But is he equally willing to see light that may first reach him some other way? Is there nothing in childhood or fatherhood that speaks of a heavenly Father? Is there nothing in human love with all its weaknesses that points up to a love that is stronger than death? Is there nothing in human forgiveness and self-devotion that may help him to believe our story of a Son of God who gave himself for men? We are not dealing fairly with the Gospel if we forget that it is presented to us not as philosophy or science or law, nor even as history, but as the revelation of God. And if such a revelation there be, we may expect to recognize the love of God as we recognize the love of men; by instinct and affinity rather than by conscious reasoning.

So far I have treated the sceptic as a man of candour, as indeed he often is. In that case he is simply looking to reason only for what reason alone cannot give. How far this may be sin I take not on me to say; but at all events it is an imperfection if he leaves powers unused that might help him in the search for truth. But let him not flatter himself that he is candid as a matter of course—still less

that he owes his candour to his scepticism. True candour is not so common as society requires us to assume. Most men are such creatures of custom or passion that they can scarcely pretend to candour at all. They just catch at the first thing that comes in their way, and call it common sense. Even those of us who really aim at truth are continually misled by pride or hatred, by sloth or carelessness, by evil thoughts of all kinds—for every base or selfish thought is so much cloud that hides the truth. The sources of error are far more commonly moral than purely intellectual.

This is the rule—that error is commonly moral—and if the sceptic is no exception to it, neither are we. It is not knowledge or orthodoxy that raises us one step above the devils who believe and tremble. We too who hope in God will need to purify ourselves, even as he is pure who dwelt among us full of grace and truth. There is no paradise of idleness even for us who have seen our Saviour shining on us like the sun in heaven, and felt the touch that endues both heart and soul and mind with power from on high. Though the clouds of doubt may never again overshadow us, the mists of sin that are always rising in dense and stifling masses round us are even more effective to hide the light from us. There is no heroic way to heaven—none but the old prosaic road of faithful effort and unwearied vigilance. That is the road our Leader trod before us; and it is only while we trace the narrow pathway where his feet

have been that we can see the splendour of the unseen world through which our journey lies. Only so shall the heavens declare his glory to us, and the earth his righteousness, that we may live, and rejoice before him for ever.



**II.**  
**THE BREAD OF GOD.**



“The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven,  
and giveth life unto the world.”—JOHN vi. 33, R.V.

## II.

### THE BREAD OF GOD.<sup>1</sup>

**B**LESSED be the Lord our God, whose mercy has preserved us through the perils of the year to welcome the returning light of Christmas Day. How natural the old festival seems, with its tidings of joy and gladness—the old festival our fathers rejoiced in, and their fathers before them, through all the generations of Christian Englishmen. True it is that last year's festival is not come back unchanged. Names that were great and mighty then are only memories now, and voices that we loved shall speak no more in this world, and new lives are unfolding of those whom Christ is training to be teachers and evangelists of children yet unborn. The years shall come and go, the nations rise and fall; but the witness of Christmas Day remains the same; and age after age till he come shall hear its glorious message of a Son of God who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven to take our nature on him and be the Son of Man for evermore.

Yet Christmas Day was not always the landmark of the year it is to us. We cannot trace it back like

<sup>1</sup> University of Cambridge, Christmas Day, 1898.

Easter to the earliest times. Far into the Nicene age the Epiphany was the great winter festival, commemorating Christ's manifestation generally, and his baptism in particular, with a secondary reference to his earthly birth. Christmas Day was of Western origin, closely related to the birthday of Mithras on December 25, and possibly to some other heathen festivals. It first appears at Rome in 360, and thence spread eastward. In the West it became a principal festival, and the Epiphany was limited chiefly to the visit of the Magi. In the East it has always been less prominent; and in Russia the chief services of the day commemorate Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. All honour too to Russia, if she has not forgotten the great salvation which God gave her and us, when he made the remnant of the Grand Army like the remnant of Sennacherib's host.

Now this Western preference of Christmas Day to the Epiphany is intensely characteristic of the Latin church. Rome has never had much liking for the more abstract forms of thought. She borrowed her philosophy in one age from the Greeks, in another from Teutonic schoolmen; and even her ecclesiastical theory was made in Africa. In her long line of popes we see statesmen, lawyers, and administrators in abundance, but no such thinkers as Anselm or Bradwardine. The great creative thoughts are not of Roman birth: even the Holy Empire was heralded by Tatian's barbarian trumpet. The splendid work she did in history was rather to maintain the old

positions than to conquer new ones. She intrenched herself behind some simple doctrines, and thought it enough to throw up round them rampart after rampart of church traditions and observances. Not to Rome was given "the eagle eye of Origen," the kingly intellect of Athanasius, the mighty manliness of Luther. She fell on evil days, when all her strength seemed needed to save the simplest elements of the Gospel from the world-wide overthrow in which the everlasting Empire perished. It were ungrateful to refuse our full admiring homage to the noble work she did in the dark times when tempest after tempest of barbarism came up like a flood of mighty waters overflowing. For centuries she stood between the living and the dead, Christ's faithful witness and evangelist: therefore also he gave her authority and power to rule the world she was rescuing—authority only forfeited by ages of misrule, power not yet lost by centuries of ever-deepening falsehood.

Rome has never laid to heart the old Gospel of Genesis, that man was made in the image of God. She starts from a false dualism of God and man, in which divine and human stand apart, or are connected by no natural affinity, but only by some definite act of the divine. That act we may make believe is just or merciful: but we cannot certainly know that it is more than inscrutable caprice, unless we fully recognize that the divine is of a higher order than the infinite of mere superhuman power and unbending law. This is the witness of the Incarnation—so

God *loved* the world—and Rome has never denied that the Son of God became the Son of Man for our salvation. Yet neither has she ventured to receive him as the hope and joy and light and life of men. St. Paul's *in Christ* is a doctrine she has left to the mystics; for in the gracious and gentle Saviour she saw the stern and awful Judge to come. So she feared, and made her gods to go before her, even the saints her fellow-servants, and went and worshipped them. This was only natural; for human nature needs a human mediator with God, and if the one true mediator's manhood is forgotten in the terrors of his deity, other mediators more like man will have to take his place. And if the freedom of God is inscrutable, the service of man cannot be reasonable. He may bow down like a slave before the Most High, but he cannot walk humbly with his God. As soon as Augustine's Calvinism had been set aside as unpractical, man was free too, and stood apart in godless independence, working out his own forgiveness, and laying up treasure in heaven by Pharisaic obedience to church traditions and observances.

Under the influence of ideas which contrasted divine and human things in the sharpest way as mutually exclusive, it was natural that Latin thought should tend to regard God's working as abrupt and define—as miraculous interventions breaking through the order of a sinful and transitory world. They shine out as points of brilliant light; but the rest is utter darkness, for there is no diffused light in the

Latin sky. God acts every now and then with a high hand and outstretched arm ; but the rest of the world's history goes on almost as if there were no God at all, for the dualism of God and man carries with it a dualism of sacred and profane which runs through history and life, so that even the continuous working of the Holy Spirit is rather to guarantee church authorities or sacred books or sacramental rites than to help our personal infirmities and guide us into truth in all its range. Thus the Incarnation is reduced to a single fact of history which took place in such a year of Cæsar Augustus—a fact which was indeed the culmination of a mighty series of interventions and deliverances, and a fact which had the most momentous consequences, but a fact related rather to the accident of sin than to the essential nature of God and man. Some of the Greeks had more or less clearly seen that, sin or no sin, the Incarnation was needed fully to express in time the latent humanity of the eternal Word in whose image man was made. But though the schoolmen were divided, the northerns rather leaning to the Greeks, the Latin spirit is best given by the answer that an Incarnation required not by sin but to declare a natural affinity of God and man, would not be supernatural at all.

The Latin church did well in holding firmly the historic truth of the Incarnation, for a gospel which explained it away would be no gospel at all. If Christ is less than perfect God, we are yet in our sins ;

for neither man nor angel can restore the image of God which sin has defaced: and if Christ is less than perfect man, we are yet in our sins; for none but man can make atonement for the sins of men. Our Saviour is indeed the living bread which came down once for all from heaven; and Rome herself has shewn us many times that if a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. But this is not the whole truth; and if we have received the love of truth at all, we shall not refuse truth which is wider than Latin thought. The bread of God is also that which ever cometh down from heaven, and ever giveth life unto the world. If Christ came down from heaven once for all, he is no less ever coming, ever calling, ever giving life, not only to his visible church, but to the men that walk in darkness; for he is the true light, whose ever-present coming lighteth every man. He is the light of the world, and he worketh hitherto.

Historic truth is in its nature infinite; for if there is but one God, the whole creation must form but one organic whole, so that if we could fully trace out any one fact of history or life in all its bearings, we should unravel the entire mystery of earth and heaven. But that which our ears have heard and our eyes have seen is only partial truth, however true it be. The best of our knowledge is only partial truth. We see truths like scattered points of starry light, and are never more than dimly conscious of the wreathing clouds of glory which overspread the ethereal deeps around them.

True it is, as has been finely said, that "The temporal at once illuminates and enshrines the eternal; and without those sacred years lived under Syrian skies, the eternal life of the High Priest of Humanity would be for us an infinite void, sending forth no light to our minds and no comfort to our hearts." Yet neither can we rise to the full significance and dignity of history till we see behind the things of time the overspreading glory of the eternal. Even as the forces battling in every drop of water are forces that rule the stars of heaven, so the forces of light and darkness contending on the narrow field of time are forces of the world where time is not. History must somehow mirror the eternal, however darkly sinners may see the likeness; and there can be nothing without its meaning for the other world. As the vacant air we breathe is full of germs of this world's life, so what seem the empty things of common life are full of potencies for life eternal. Our passing spites and worries may be sordid enough; but the thankfulness and patience which overcome them belong to a world which passeth not away. So step by step we rise from the little tragedies of daily life to the great and overawing catastrophes of history; and in the midst of all of them stands the glorious form, divine and therefore human, of that same Christ who through an eternal spirit offered once for all the sacrifice which has won for us an eternal redemption.

In saying that we in England are far too much



enslaved to Latin glosses on the Gospel, I am not thinking of surface matters, or of the foolish people who are bewitched with every novelty, if only they hear say it comes from Rome. Many of our truest churchmen and not a few of our stoutest Protestants have not got far beyond the Latin way of thinking. If the reformers broke the yoke of bondage, they could not cast out the spirit of slavery. We seem to forget that the Latin church was not the first word of God's Holy Spirit—as neither shall it be the last. Before the days of Roman power there flourished a church of wider thoughtfulness and clearer sight of Christ. The Greek world between the second and fourth centuries is astonishingly modern—in some ways more modern than a world within the memory of our fathers, for the course of centuries has once more brought round England—not our northern island only—to the old questions of our Saviour's Person which occupied his faithful teachers at Alexandria. These are the questions that will stir the coming age; and the English people is plainly called of God to fight the hardest of the battle. And will he not sustain us in it? Is it because there is not a God in England that we inquire so timidly at Rome?

The worst of the modern church of Rome is not simply that she has added many falsehoods to the truth, nor even that the falsehoods are the working parts of her doctrine, but that such truth as she retains is made of none effect by the practical Agnosticism which condemns her children to hear

the Saviour's voice at second-hand, and only through a church which claims more than God requires for himself—to be believed without regard to reason. Every word of his prophets calls us to judge righteous judgment, and every saying of the Lord himself expects reason to recognize truth once presented to it. Yet on the final question of all—whether we have a real knowledge, a direct and personal knowledge of God in Christ, Rome and the Agnostic are in full agreement.

Here then we come back to the old battlefields of Clement and Athanasius, for the self-same question underlay both Gnosticism and Arianism. It underlay the Reformation also, and underlies even the reconstruction of society which is visibly the task of our time, for the knowledge of Christ is the revelation of man. Only in the light of his sinless purity dare we look up the steep ascents to heights of human nature towering as far above the angels as the deeps of sin are sunk below the beasts that perish. Christ or Agnosticism? is the question, old and ever new, round which the world must finally divide: and we are in the thick of battle, for much that passes for Christian is pure Agnosticism. If we are to reconstruct society, we must take up the old problems of Christ's Person; yet not quite on the old Eastern lines, for we may call no man master upon earth. The Eastern church was very far from faultless. It has suffered more than Rome from oppression without and ignorance

within, though it has never so deeply sinned against light. It leaned too much to philosophy, and never fully realized the working of the Spirit in man; and even its noble defence of Christ's deity tempted it to forget like Rome his manhood, and like Rome to worship idols. Its deathly stupor of a thousand years and more is not without a cause. Meanwhile God teaches daily; and every great revolution of history has brought its own great revelation with it. The hard and narrow Latin schoolmaster taught with power the unity of Christendom. The Reformation tore in sunder the unspiritual unity of Western Europe, rediscovered our Lord's forgotten manhood, and laid a firm foundation for the future by subjecting all human teaching and authority to Scripture first, and now to revelation howsoever known, for God reveals himself in divers manners. Not for nothing the stars of heaven and the dust of the earth are given to our scrutiny, and forgotten generations yield up to us their buried secrets, and human life is developed for us with a richness and complexity our fathers never dreamed of. The voice that comes up from the earth, the voice that comes back from the past, the voice that meets them from our own heart—these three agree in one; and their witness is of Christ.

God calls us to know him for ourselves; not to hear about him from other men, and fancy that enough. We live by the spiritual truth we make our own by living it, not by the intellectual truth we confess with our lips. The corporate confession which

is our communion with each other is no better than the belief of the devils, unless we join to it the personal confession which is our communion with Christ. Our faith is a poor thing if it never rises to the heights where worlds and churches and griefs and sins are all forgotten in full-hearted adoration—My Lord and my God. Whom have I in heaven but thee? Let this be the keynote of our Christmas joy. It will not be the less pure and holy if we refuse to recognize in the Virgin birth an isolated marvel which puts reason to confusion. The Incarnation stands alone in history, not for want of intimate connexion with life in all its range, but just because it is the one far-off divine event to which creation pointed from the first, the full and final revelation which sin has not called forth, and sin shall not defeat. In it is not only God's own gracious answer to the hopes and yearnings of his erring children here in earth; it is God's own eternal truth which far excels the fairest dreams of goodness men have ever dreamed, God's own transcendent gift of life eternal far exceeding all that we could ever ask or think. The incarnate Son of God is not like a meteor in history, which flashes up from the darkness and is gone in a moment: he is the historic point of ever-growing light by which we see the overspreading glory of the risen Son of Man who is our ever-present and abiding life and joy. For the bread of God is that which ever cometh down from heaven, and ever giveth life unto the world.



**III.**  
**THE DEATH OF QUEEN**  
**VICTORIA.**

“ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord.”—ISA. vi. 1.

### III.

#### THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA.<sup>1</sup>

YOU must notice that the last word is not the sacred name Jehovah. It is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who doth from his throne behold all the dwellers upon earth.

If the scene of Isaiah's call is laid in the temple, the vision is not of buildings made with hands. The vails of the temple are fallen away; yet neither ark nor mercy-seat appears—only a palace and a throne. Solomon's tiny sanctuary—much smaller than this room—is become a palace, and the skirts of glory fill its courts. These things saw Isaiah, when he saw Christ's glory, and spake of him.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord." Uzziah was a great king, though his last years were clouded, and his long reign of more than half a century was the most magnificent period of Jewish history since the time of Solomon. The overshadowing northern kingdom of Jeroboam II was in confusion, and the Assyrian war-cloud seemed to have turned some other way. So Jerusalem flourished, and trade and wealth increased. The temple service

<sup>1</sup> Girton College, January 27, 1901.



was regular and its ritual splendid, for the priests guided the monarchy they had saved from Athaliah's murderous hands, and the people were devoted to the stately ceremonial. Was it not the religion of the state by law established? The very swindler said, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich. Here surely was a pious people, enjoying well-deserved prosperity.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord." Here is a date if you please; but we shall see a deeper meaning in it if we note the contrast of king Uzziah with the Lord of lords. It is the passing of the earthly king which reveals the King of kings who passeth not away. God speaks in change and death and revolution, in tones men cannot choose but hear. His way is in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. There is a solemn pause when the great ones of the earth are taken; and when we look again, behold, all things are new.

The vision of God is the call of the prophet; and it gave him eyes to see the misery and sin which underlay that proud prosperity. There was the sin of the land-grabbers rampant. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." There was the sin of the drunkards rampant. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them." There too was the prophet that teacheth lies; and there

were rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrah. There was wealth in abundance, religion in abundance, national defence in abundance; but the nation was not sound. So it was crushed in a moment when Damascus and Samaria joined against it.

God grant it be written in history, that in the year that Queen Victoria died, we saw the Lord. She is in all our hearts—the queen who never shamed us, the woman whose kindness never failed, for in more than courtly language, she was a gracious queen. In her young days there was deep distress and bitter discontent in England; but in our time every murmur round her throne had long since died away. She gathered her people to her by the toil of threescore years and more; and by her sorrows too, for she was not spared the heaviest of sorrows and bereavements. Queen Elizabeth herself was not loved more proudly in her last glorious years by the England she had saved from destruction. And now that our ancient queen is taken from us, the strangers of all nations join our mourning for her who was but now the most august of living sovereigns.

Half the pathos of life is in its changes. First we see our elders fall in front of us, and hear ourselves called forward to the front of battle; then our equals fall around us, and younger men behind us, till our own turn comes, for no man leaves that battlefield alive. So God reveals himself, as one by one he takes away the fathers we loved, the friends

## 34 THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA

we leaned on, perhaps even the children we delighted in; but only that he may himself be our portion in the land where every work of love and mercy done in the wide world is treasured up for evermore.

Like Uzziah, Queen Victoria was marvellously helped. We are altogether too forgetful of the thousand years and more of mercies culminating in her splendid reign. We have no need to envy Israel. Our God is a living God of living men, not a dead one since the fathers fell asleep. The voice that spoke on Sinai speaks in England still; and the arm of the Lord which divided the Red Sea works as mightily as ever in our midst. England is as much God's people as ever Israel was, and London just as much his dwelling as Jerusalem. Our land is as holy as Judah; our streets are as near him as the mercy-seat of old. It was not for Israel's righteousness, or because God loved Egypt and Assyria less than Israel, for there is no respect of persons with him; neither is it for England's righteousness, or because God loves France and Russia less than England, for there is no respect of persons with him. As he chose Israel to do one great work for him, so has he chosen England now to do another. He that brought up Israel from Egypt also brought up the English out of Germany, and many a time delivered our fathers from the house of bondage. It is he who has made us as the stars of heaven for number, and given us western lands and southern seas for our inheritance. It is

he who has made peace on our soil, hardly broken by the tread of enemies for the best part of a thousand years—he, who gave the pride of the Spaniard to the winds before us, and scattered the fleets of France in the clash of Trafalgar. It was not our own right hand—our wooden walls and streak of silver sea—that wrought salvation for us, but the Lord himself has been a wall of fire about us. Our fathers cried to him, and he delivered them in many a day of trouble and rebuke—to set our rule in the sea, and our dominion at the world's end.

So here we stand, at the parting of the ways. The Victorian age is ended. However the new king may strive to follow his mother's footsteps, he cannot entirely do so. There must and will be change: God grant it give us worthier thoughts of our high calling. If greatness is to be measured by power to do his work, ours is without question and by far the greatest of the nations. God never gave Israel a nobler task than he has laid on England—to witness of truth and peace and mercy to every nation under heaven. So much the sorer will be our punishment, if we turn aside to sordid selfishness and filthy gain, to lies and idol-worships, and then thank God that we are not as other men. As he dealt with Israel, so will he deal with us, for there is no respect of persons with him. Though England were the signet on his right hand, yet will he pluck us thence and give us into the hand of our enemies, as he did that awful coronation morning when round

Westminster Abbey rose the noise of tumult and the glare of flames, and even the Conqueror trembled as our trembling forefathers laid on his head the crown which the judgment of God on the battlefield gave him.

In the year that Queen Victoria died, God is speaking to us; and if we refuse the still small voice, he will speak again in the whirlwind and the earthquake. He will speak to us in righteousness, and in judgment he will reckon with us. If we have oppressed the stranger, and removed our neighbour's landmark, and set our heart on covetousness; shall he not visit for this? If we have walked in the counsel of the ungodly, or consented to the shedding of innocent blood; shall he not require it of us? If we have allowed the land-grabbers and the drunkards and the oppressors of the poor to corrupt our statesmen; shall he not judge us? If our heart has been lifted up to say, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas, and my own power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; shall he not abase our pride and slay us by the hand of strangers? His works are truth, his ways are judgment. Are we doing truth before him, or walking in selfish ways of our own?

These are questions that ought to be put, for these are the questions our conscience asks us. On some of them we may be clear: on others I fear we are far from innocent. If we have not done the crimes ourselves, we may have done worse, for the

deliberate excusing of sin is worse than the sin itself. However, the sin of a nation is nothing else than the sin of the men who form that nation. If we wish to make our prayer heard on high, there is but one way to do it. "Thyself keep pure." Do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God, for this is all that God requires of us. The Lord incarnate added nothing to those words of Micah. Keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right; for that shall bring us peace at the last. So when darkness comes, as come it will—when the snows of threescore years are whitening on us, and our early guides are long since gone to rest, and the friends of our life in whom we garnered up our love are taken from us, we shall still have strength to do God's work, in loneliness and sadness it may be, yet in peaceful calm and overflowing thankfulness, for the clouds and darkness are behind us; forward shines the golden dawning of the western sunrise.

May God of his mercy give us truth and wisdom to serve our king and country, and to do his will—for he is King of kings and Lord of lords—according to the calling he shall give us in this his holy commonwealth of England.



IV.

**NEITHER WILL THEY BE  
PERSUADED.**



“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”—LUKE xvi. 31.

#### IV.

### NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED.

THESE words are the ending of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; and I need not discuss the whole of it. Let me only warn you that parable is parable, and not literal fact. It is good for the lesson our Lord means to teach: but we cannot take for granted that he means to teach everything he seems to say—that there is fire in the other world, for example, or that in paradise we shall sit on Abraham's lap. He makes the ideas of his own time the machinery of his parable; but he does not necessarily warrant them for true. They may be true, but that is not what he wants to tell us.

To return to our parable. What is wrong with the rich man, that he gets into a place of torment? He must be a bad man: yet our Lord does not tell us what his badness is, or even that he is bad at all. In fact, I take Dives (so we will call him in Latin) for a very decent and respectable man of the world. Our Lord cannot mean that it is wrong to be rich, for he puts Abraham in paradise, who was very rich. Nor does he hint that Dives got his wealth by bad means, or made a specially bad use of it. If he makes him-

self comfortable, he does not seem to get drunk. He is not arrogant, for he does not drive Lazarus away ; nor even uncharitable, for he seems to send a servant out to him every day with some meat. There is no reason to doubt that Lazarus did get the crumbs.

Well then, what is wrong ? Just this, I think, that he made himself comfortable without thinking more about Lazarus. He sends him his dinner every day, and thinks his duty done ; and many of us will say in our hearts that so it was. Yet if there is any one lesson about charity which our Lord takes pains to teach us, it is that if we do not send a blessing with our gifts, no blessing will come back to us. We may give money or money's worth as Dives did ; but if we do not also give something of our very selves, our giving is vain. God does not make up his ledger in pounds, shillings and pence : he cares only for a willing heart and loving service. Money may be the token of them, but it cannot supply their place. If there is no spirit of love in your charity, it is worth nothing before God. This is what was wrong with Dives. He was too busy making himself comfortable to consider why God sent Lazarus to his gate—that he might do him kindness himself, and not put off his duty with some cheap charity through a servant. True kindness is what a little child can give ; but the greatest of kings cannot buy it. It is but another name for the wisdom which cannot be gotten for gold ; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. You will not be wrong if you say that the whole

purpose of all religion is to teach you true kindness to your fellow-men, for it is through the love of men that we learn the love of God, and by the love of men both sheep and goats will be judged in the last day. God reveals himself to us in every one he sends in our way, if we do him true kindness; but Dives passed every day without heeding. He took no pains to learn the lesson God was teaching him: what wonder if he came to a place of torment?

Passing over the first request he makes, I come to the one I want to speak of. If Lazarus cannot help him, cannot he go and help others? Dives has five brethren; and they seem to be living much the same life as he did, for he fears lest they also come into this place of torment. Now in what temper does Dives ask this? Some of the commentators think he is beginning to learn unselfishness: others reply that his anxiety for his brothers is only love of self, or a covert hint that God never gave him a fair chance. If I had to decide the question, I should say that Dives is learning something: but upon the whole I would rather not discuss it, for I do not think this is what our Lord meant to teach us. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The Jew had no such Bible as ours; but his Old Testament was enough to leave him without excuse. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

Here is the religion of the natural man for you.

He knows he is a sinner, and therefore he fears God, for only perfect love casteth out fear. God is a tyrant who needs to be propitiated with sacrifices and outwitted with cunningly devised ceremonials. So he sees God in the great and strong wind and the earthquake and the fire of miracles and mighty works, but not in the still small voice of common life. He will allow that God speaks every now and then from the whirlwind, but not that he reveals himself every day in the appeal of our fellow-men for true kindness. Give us a miracle, says he, that shall silence doubt and scare us once for all from sin for evermore. He forgets that it is not doubt but unwillingness that hides God from us, and that no amount of terror can overcome unwillingness. If a spirit passed before our face, it could tell us nothing to the purpose but what we know already : and if the angel of wrath were revealed in flaming fire, the sinners would return to their sin the moment they got over their fright. "And Abraham said, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." And they were not persuaded a few months later, when one did rise from the dead.

God gave us the common relations of life as husbands and wives, and fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and friends and neighbours and citizens, that through them we might learn the law of love towards our fellow-men by which we shall all be judged at the last, from the most ignorant of heathens to the most cultivated of Christians. He gave them even to the

heathen ; but we know that the Son of Man came down from heaven to destroy the sin that blinds us to God's revelation in them. The striving to love our fellow-men is itself that striving to know God which Christ has told us is eternal life. Be your religion what it may, your learning, your charity, your churchgoing what you please : if you have not the spirit of love, you have still to learn Christ's alphabet. Some men have been enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; yet all this availed them nothing, for without love their splendid gifts were cold and dead. Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away : but faith and hope and love—only these three—abide for ever ; and the greatest of these is love.



V.

THE OLD THINGS PASSED AWAY.



“The old things are passed away ; behold, they are become new.”—2 Cor. v. 17, R.V.

## V.

### THE OLD THINGS PASSED AWAY.<sup>1</sup>

NOT all things are become new. That is a false reading; and the context shews that St. Paul is not speaking of old things generally, but of our old selves and the things we loved in past time.

If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation :  
The old things are passed away ; behold, they are become new.

Neither have all things yet become new ; only the same old things that passed away like a dream of the night. He is telling us of changes going on now, not looking forward like St. John to the time when he that sitteth on the throne shall say, Behold, I make all things new. He speaks indeed of powers of a future age, but only in their working here on earth—of the *ἐπίγεια*, not the *ἐπουράνια*.<sup>2</sup>

“The old things are passed away.” The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, and the trees of the forest shall vanish away. We are ourselves in constant flux and never-ceasing change ; for only in

<sup>1</sup> University of Cambridge, June 16, 1901 (Commencement Sunday).

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 12.

romances do the living sleep for ages, whether Ephesus or Boston be their place of waking. Truth itself seems to change; for many times a great leader's teaching has lost its power in the hands of disciples who turned a life into a scheme of orthodoxy. The great and wide sea is ever changing, never changed; but the systems in which men of little faith try to fix truth for ever pass before us like the long procession of the icebergs breaking from their northern glaciers and drifting away to their doom in the south.

"The old things are passed away," and quite rightly we are slow to see it. He has little sense of holiness who tramples on the past, or scorns the words of those whom God has taken from us. Yet the old things do pass away, and often silently. We seem to wake of a sudden to find that the old hand has lost its cunning, the old custom is turned to wrong, the old teaching emptied of its living force. Then what are we to do? We have a carnal craving for something fixed in this world, some rock of adamant on which the storms of time shall beat in vain. Meaner men simply will not take the trouble to give up the old things. The foolish mother would like her baby to be always little; the stupid politician shrinks from needful reform; the cowardly Christian looks out for a master upon earth, or hides himself amongst the trees of dogma, that no fresh voice from heaven may unsettle the thing he is pleased to call his faith.

Yet revelation always comes in change; and change itself is revelation, if we have eyes to see it. So it is

in life. When we were children, we thought and spoke as children; but now we have put away childish things. So in history. Only decaying nations and decaying churches like the declining Empire and the modern church of Rome look back to some canonized past, and strive to live by tradition. We are simply unbelieving when we cling like drowning men to truth of other days which cannot be God's message to ourselves. All purely natural things must pass away. The beauty of our childhood fades, the proud powers of our manhood fail us, and words that were spirit and life to our fathers are empty sounds to us whom God has changed. Who cares now for the battle-cry of the Crusaders? The old things are passed away, and the glory seems departed with them from the earth. We look wistfully to the culture of Greece, the splendour of Rome, the fervour of the early Christians, the simple faith of the Middle Ages, the strong righteousness of Puritanism; but we can no more recall them than we can wake the dead. They are passed away for ever, and we must face as we best can the work of a world which without them seems cheerless and commonplace.

The new century is hardly well begun; yet we have already seen impressive changes. As a student of history I might speak of the great historians that are gone from us, or of the lives that are trembling with us — whom God long preserve. As an old student in the University I might tell of the gaps in our ranks, from heads of houses to the last young

explorer cut off in his prime.<sup>1</sup> As an Englishman who counts the state as holy as the church, I might speak of the great queen under whom we all grew up—for no man in the Senate House that winter morning had heard before in Cambridge the cry, God save the King. But now that the Victorian age and the nineteenth century are ended, let me rather touch some of the great changes they witnessed.

Those changes were not the offspring of the French Revolution. The years of confusion were a clearance of rubbish rather than a laying of new foundations. The cannon of Austerlitz and Leipsic proclaimed the end of an old age, not the birth of a new age. The creative work was done more in America before them, and during the stupid Metternich reaction after them. Its guiding ideas I think were two—both contained in the Gospel, both made practical by the Reformation, both prepared for by the clearances of the eighteenth century, both full of promise for the twentieth. The first was a deeper sense of the worth and dignity of man as an individual, and in his natural grouping of nations and tribes and tongues and peoples. Hence on one side national upheavals—first Greece and Belgium, then Italy, then Germany; and the Balkan states are only kept down by selfish neighbours. In another direction a wave of reform ran over Europe. If it was not in form religious, neither was it a simple return to the Rights of Man, but in the main a serious endeavour to fit men for their duty to their

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Wilkin, King's College : died at Cairo, May 13, 1901.

country and to each other, and to raise the standard of duty in all relations. On yet another side, the higher value set on the individual gave a higher value to the societies of nations and churches in which he found himself. Some take this development of the society for a reaction from the individualism of the age; but to myself it seems part of the same movement, and only so far sound as it is such. After all, even the church was made for man, not man for the church. The other guiding idea of the nineteenth century was that of evolution, which interpreted first science, then history and theology: and if it has thrown no light on the final mysteries of speculation—first principles cannot be demonstrated—it has marvellously illuminated for us the methods of God's working in the world.

These two guiding thoughts are both intensely Christian. The reddest of red republicans never claimed for man such dignity as is given him in our old story of a Son of God who gave himself a ransom for us all. The boldest of levellers never went such lengths as we go in the Supper of the Lord, where rank and race are utterly ignored, and all come up alike to feed by faith on Christ. The greatest enthusiast of nations cannot outdo the love of country which lights the pages of his Bible. It flashes up at the outset, when Miriam sings her song of triumph over Pharaoh's host; and it shines out at the end on the gloom of the gathering storm when the last of the Hebrew prophets, James the Lord's brother, denounces wrath

from the Lord of hosts on the oppressors of the poor. The Lord himself was an Israelite indeed when he refused to hurl a rotten Jewish nation on a rotten Gentile world: and at the end of the Canon comes the impressive protest of the Revelation of St. John, which remained for ages unechoed, that nations and tribes and tongues and peoples are God's permanent groupings of mankind. As for evolution, what else is the majestic development of the revelation from the furthest past which the astronomer can discern to the furthest future which the prophet can divine? Gradually the ages led up to the coming of their Lord: gradually the centuries are unfolding something of the fulness of his grace and truth.

But if the guiding ideas of the nineteenth century were in the Gospel from the first, they would hardly have been got out of it without the Reformation. The Latin church had left its work of witnessing and ministering for Christ, and made itself a judge and a divider among men. Its doctrines were all poisoned by one colossal blasphemy. It required what God has never asked even for himself—to be believed without regard to reason, and obeyed without regard to conscience. So the yoke of Christian Pharisaism had to be broken, that men might be free to serve God in spirit and truth. The unspiritual unity of Western Europe had to be shattered in pieces, that nations might escape the tyranny of an alien and sectarian church. Above all, the idea of an infallible church holding plenary powers from an absent king

had to be rooted out before men could begin to see the gradual development which is God's word to successive generations. But an infallible church is also incorrigible: therefore he cut her in sunder, and appointed her portion with the hypocrites.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the afterswell of the storm; and only the nineteenth was free to take up the work which the Reformation made possible even in countries where it was rejected. That work is hardly more than begun; but we can already see its character. Our losses are no doubt immense. The old social order is gone, the old conception of miracle and inspiration is overthrown, and a growing tangle of practical questions represents the growing complexity of life and thought. But is there no gain in our wider knowledge of truth? in a more strenuous and earnest life? in a quickened hatred of social wrong? in a higher tone of that national conscience which under any form of government speaks the final word? Is it nothing to know Christ as he never was known before? to see the realms of grace and nature joined in their incarnate Lord? to be made free from the horror of past ages, the inscrutable despot far off in heaven, who sought some other glory than the highest welfare of his creatures? No heavier burden has been lifted from men since the Gospel swept away the whole slavery of gods and saints and demons, and left us face to face with the risen Son of Man who hears the prayer of all flesh from his throne on high.



True, we have dangers enough in hatreds of nations and hatreds of classes, in rich who corrupt the poor and poor who are reckless for want of hope, in armed militarism, in blatant quackeries, in recrudescent superstition. But we need not despair if the gospel of commerce has gendered strife, or the gospel of reform has left many evils uncured, or the gospel of culture has turned out some cultured criminals. Commerce, reform, culture are gospels good and true; but they are not the gospel of salvation. Our hope is not in these, but in him who gave them. Our fathers cried to him, and not one of their children is forgotten before him. If the old things are passed away, are they therefore lost? As the Lord of goodness liveth, nothing that is good can perish. Though like the corn of wheat it fall into the ground and die, it dies only that it may bring forth much fruit. Christ came to destroy nothing, save the works of the devil, but to complete and realize in sunbright splendour every vision of goodness which ever floated in the twilight of our world of sin.

"The old things are passed away," and they cannot return. This we hear is Nature's law of change. Things tend downward, and only the touch of life can lift them up again. Now look at history. If Greece has perished, she remains a light to the world. If Rome's eternal throne is cast down, her witness to right and law is imperishable. If the old saints are mouldered into dust, their spirit lives among us in many a patient toiler of whom the world is not

worthy—more prosaic it may be, but no way less heroic than that which dared the cross and the fire in the olden time. If Puritanism has passed away, it has left us many of the best features of English life—the sober earnestness, the civil freedom, the Sunday rest, the quiet sense of duty which labours to unloose the bands of wickedness, and to undo the heavy burdens of all that suffer wrong. The more appalling the world-wide scene of change, decay and ruin, the more certainly a power of life is working upward through it all.

“The old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.” This is God’s law of change. They leave us only to return in other shapes, they vanish only to come back in nobler forms. God never takes away but that he may give us more abundantly. He takes away the innocence of childhood, that he may give us the old man’s crown of glory. He takes away the fathers we leaned on and the children in whom we garnered up our love, that he may be himself the father of the fatherless and the hope of them that are desolate. He takes away the guides we trusted, the friends who were our very life, that he may be himself our guide and everliving friend. He unsettles the simple belief of ignorance, that he may give us the nobler faith of them that know. He smites with emptiness the burning words which stirred our fathers, that he may give us other words of deeper meaning and of yet more thrilling call. Nothing that is good can perish. Though he sift it as corn is sifted in a

sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. The dross of our thoughts shall perish; but the word of our God which came to us will embody itself again in worthier forms. Through all the changing scenes of history his call remains the same—Come upward hither, and I will shew thee of my glory.

It is the same in life. In all time of our wealth we are ready to ask, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built? Hath not my power and the might of my hand gotten me this wealth? But in times of change and trouble we learn that God is holy, and mercy is with him. When failure or sickness or sorrow or shame has crushed our pride, thoughts that are not our own are wafted to us, and words that are not our own are put in our mouth. In the loneliness of affliction there is one that draws near to us; and then we feel the touch of life that lifts us on our feet, and bids us go in peace, and sin no more.

Yet is it real after all? Can we know God for ourselves, or no? Here is the question of questions for all the ages; and never was it more keenly fought than in our own. Year by year the battle thickens, and louder grow the shouts of war, and deadlier still the fiery darts of the wicked: and therefore mightier than our fathers knew shall be the works of God among their children. In the whirlwind and in the storm he shall speak; in shakings of earth and heaven shall he plead with all flesh. By the distress of nations and perplexity of

statesmen, by the strange thoughts of a new generation, by the formless dreams of better things that float around us—by these signs we know that some mystery of God is even now unfolding, as glorious as the call of the Gentiles, and as hard for our Pharisees and Sadducees to receive. But the old things that passed away are never lost. In Christ they are become new, and shine with a light we never saw in them before. There is no loss, however great it seem, which God will not abundantly recompense to them that are faithful and patient; no patient and faithful service which he will not reward with the honour and glory and immortality for which we seek, and far above all these the crowning gift of everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord.



**VI.**  
**PATIENCE.**

“Surely I come quickly.”—Rev. xxi. 20.

## VI.

### PATIENCE.<sup>1</sup>

**B**RETHREN—you who are gathered here to-day for the solemn service in which this church and realm admit you to the high dignity and weighty charge whereunto God hath called you—Peace be with you, now and always.

You hear the risen Saviour's gracious promise, Surely I come quickly: and let him that heareth say, Even so, come, Lord Jesus. It is a hard saying. Eighteen hundred winters have come and gone, and the Lord is not come yet. Sixty generations of the faithful have waited in vain for the lightning flash of his appearance, and sixty generations of scoffers have asked, Where is the promise of his coming? How long, O Lord? is the never-ceasing cry of the saints: but no sign from heaven breaks the frozen silence of the sky, no glorious apparition of a risen Son of Man comes riding on the whirlwind and the storm to deliver the souls of his elect from the wrong and outrage of a world of sin. And so, says the faithless hymn—

“And so we wait and watch in fear:—  
It may be that the Lord is near.”

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<sup>1</sup> Hereford Cathedral, December 22, 1901 (Ordination Sermon).



"It may be." Nay, in sure and certain truth our Lord is near and in our midst, nearer to us than we are to one another, nearer to us than our very flesh. He is not like a stranger who needs to come from a far country, for he is with us already, pleading here with every soul that hears these words of mine, and pleading at the ends of the earth with every soul that never heard his name, for he is the true light whose ever-present coming lighteth every man. The eyes of sense are blind, and he that loveth sin shall not behold him; but earth is just as full as heaven of his glory, and even we by faith can see his comings in the silence of the night and in the turmoil of the day, on the sunlit hills and by the stormy sea, in the rise and fall of kingdoms and in the petty worries of our daily work. Whatever comes to pass, he comes to us in it, and speaks to us in it; and blessed is he that answereth, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

These are the comings of the Lord in our time, the teaching and the training of our souls, not vaguely for heaven, but for that particular state of life to which he shall please to call us in the world to come. Betide us what may, *that* is the word he speaks to us; and the pure in heart will know its meaning. Cleanse your hearts till you see him in the common work of life; and then you need not fear the great and dreadful day when every eye shall see him. But of that day neither man nor angel knoweth, nor did the Lord himself in the days of his flesh

He commands us to watch, to have our loins girded and our lights burning, and to be like servants waiting for their master when he cometh home. "In whatsoever I find you, in that I will judge you,"—one of the very few sayings of the Lord not recorded in the Gospels. But he never told St. John that he would come soon. That word *quickly* does not mean that he will come without delay, but that he will come quickly when he does come. As the lightning shineth from one end of heaven to the other, so shall his coming be. In fact, in many of his sayings he plainly shews his knowledge that his last coming would not be soon.

One great coming he did indeed expressly limit to "this generation." "Verily I say unto you that there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see it." So the apostles understood that he would come in their time: and they were not mistaken. Did he not come with power? did he not judge the living and the dead? when he sent forth his living church on its long career of victory, and gathered the eagles of destruction to the dead church of Annas and Caiaphas. The destruction of Jerusalem put an end to one great age of the world; but *that* coming of the Lord was no more future to St. John in Patmos than it is to us.

Behold, I come quickly, is the message old and ever new. He comes with the eagles of destruction—the Roman eagles round Jerusalem, the northern eagles round Rome, the Turkish eagles round Con-

stantinople, the German eagles round Paris—God forbid it be some other eagles round London or New York. Yet he comes not always in storm and tempest and distress of nations. He comes in the trials and bereavements of life and in its joys and triumphs too, in every word of truth and mercy that falls from human lips, and seems nearest in the still small voice that rises from unfathomable deeps of human consciousness. Brethren, when you feel the tumult of evil passion rising in your hearts, pause and listen. If a word is wafted to you—no matter whence—which says, Do right, abate your pride, give up that hatred, know of a surety that this is the word of the Lord to you, a coming of the Lord as real as the fiery dawning of the day of doom.

Behold, I come quickly. His words are as a trumpet blast across the ages, rousing one generation after another from the deadly sleep of the backsliders. His comings do seem sudden to sinners like us, for his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways his ways. Men are impatient, and he is the God of patience. Most of our sins and most of our mistakes come from impatience. Men were impatient, and made them gods in the image of corruptible man, and beasts, and creeping things. They were impatient, and calculated the day of his coming in every generation afresh. They were impatient, and put their trust in spiritual directors and church traditions, that they might walk by sight and not by faith. They were impatient, and slew their brethren with

sword and cross and fire for not following them, and thought malice and hatred and lying and slander—for the good of the church—a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

Brethren, you will find it the hardest part of your work to wait with patience on the Lord, always watching for his comings and hasting unto them, but always leaving him in his own way and in his own good time to clear away that difficulty, to remove that hindrance, to right that wrong. Behold, all souls are mine, saith the Lord; and by the mystery of his dealings with your own, I charge you to reverence his dealing with another. Be sure that he will try your patience to the uttermost. Time after time ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. It is not always an evil servant who saith, My lord delayeth his coming; nor was it only the foolish virgins who slumbered and slept before the bridegroom came. You will find it only too easy to crowd out healthy doubts and questionings, to stifle faith and even truth and conscience in the ceaseless fidget of laborious impatience which is now in fashion. You will hear presently the noble charge which is the charter of your office. Study that charge again and again, and make sure that all your work is done accordingly. You will hear in it that you are not servers of tables and providers of spiritual excitement, but messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord. Your work is to feed the sheep of Christ, whom he bought with his

death, and for whom he shed his blood—and to feed them with the bread of life: and the bread of life is Christ in all his comings, for he that once came down from heaven for our salvation is always coming down from heaven and always giving life to the whole world.

Now consider what manner of man our Saviour was, that you may learn to be like him. He never spoils his work with hurry, never debases it to spiritual excitement. There is no impatience even in his burning words of sevenfold Woe on scribes and Pharisees. He bids gather up the fragments, and folds the napkin when he rises from the dead. Above all, he has patience to limit his work. He trains a few disciples carefully, and is content to be an utter failure in the world's eyes. But he knew in whom he trusted. He kept up his unfailing patience by constant communion with God and study of the words God spake to them of old: and you must do the like. Whatever you leave undone, you must make time for continual prayer and daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures. Let no man deceive you, for this is vital, and there are many deceivers. I myself have heard an ordination address which openly treated the study of Scripture as waste of time. Let no man persuade you that your first duty is to organize clubs and guilds, to multiply services and approve your ministry by getting good subscriptions and overflowing congregations. All this may be excellent: but if you let it crowd out the weightier

matters of personal communion with God and study of his holy Word, your work is dead, your ministration vain.

Patience, patience yet again. The Lord is good to them that wait for him. He never left prayer unanswered, or the cup of cold water without reward. Bear your witness truly, for the Holy Ghost is witness also, and will confirm you not with the miracles of old time, but with greater works than these. Fear not: and if he tarry, wait his time. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work—the work of his life—shall be. Study his comings in the past with loving reverence, and watch for his comings in the present with loving patience: so shall you learn to look with loving expectation to that last great and terrible coming, for perfect love casteth out fear. There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ. No stranger shall be revealed in that day's flaming fire, but our own good Lord, the Lord who loves us, and in his own blood loosed us from our sins. And then we shall see with our eyes the answer to Faith's perpetual challenge—Must not the love that beareth all things also be the love that overcometh all things?



**VII.**

**CHRIST “GAVE NO PROOFS.”**



“If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.”—JOHN xv. 24.

## VII.

### CHRIST "GAVE NO PROOFS."<sup>1</sup>

IN 1742 there came out a remarkable book—*Christianity not founded on Argument*—by Henry Dodwell, the son of the learned non-juror. Its purport is this. "Reasonable belief is a contradiction in terms. We are commanded to believe, not to reason; and if we stop to reason things out, we shall never get anything proved. The command is to us all, and makes no allowance for children or unlearned. Moreover, the man who reasons is a doubter; and doubt is not the faith which overcometh the world. The Lord himself gave no proofs, but required men to believe him without proof, so that reasoning is rebellion pure and simple. Reason and religion are inconsistent with each other, for reason rests on doubt and suspicion, religion on submission and faith. The safe motto is Tertullian's *Credo quia absurdum.*"

There can be little doubt that Dodwell wrote in bitter irony: yet many mistook his satire for a powerful defence of Christianity; and to this day there are many Christians who believe in sober

<sup>1</sup> Ely Cathedral, February 21, 1904.

earnest more or less of what Dodwell wrote in irony. He did but speak the avowed belief of some, the secret thought of many more, that the Gospel is contrary to reason and common sense. Some of these men smother their conscience for themselves and make very good conventional Christians. Others call in some infallible church or other to smother their conscience; and these also pass for Christians. Those only are called unbelievers who draw the logical conclusion by rejecting the Gospel entirely; yet they are no way greater unbelievers than the others, and every now and then they are better Christians, if we judge them by their fruits, as the Lord commands us.

Now I do not want just now to prove that Christianity is not contrary to reason; but I do want to shew you the absolute and utter falseness of Dodwell's position, that our Lord gave no proofs, but required men to believe him without proof. Many people have a lurking idea that it is more or less true; and many more who see that it is false do not understand how grossly and outrageously false it is. Few indeed of us I fear distinctly see how steadily our Lord appeals to reason in all his acts and words.

Yes, say some, He did give proofs, for he worked miracles. I agree that he did signs, as St. John prefers to call them; and these signs I believe are weighty proofs. There has been far too much reaction from the eighteenth century doctrine which saw nothing in them but proofs. It is absurd to say, as some do, that even if miracles be true, they prove

nothing but themselves. If the story of Lazarus be true, surely it proves that our Lord had not only power to wake the dead, but shewed infinite delicacy and tenderness in doing it. The mistake was in forgetting that the signs were something more than works done to prove his divinity. They were not simply displays of power, but the natural outflow and expression of his goodness and mercy. Read for instance the story of Jairus' daughter, and see how even the power that wakes the dead is overshadowed by the marvellous outflow of gentleness and patience and tender care, not only for the child, but even for the woman who delays his urgent errand.

But I am not thinking only or even chiefly of miracles. Jesus of Nazareth spoke with authority in the sense that he spoke for himself instead of quoting tradition like the rabbis, and in the sense that he never spoke a doubting word. He says, Verily, verily; never a Peradventure. But he did not speak with authority, if that means that he did not submit to our reason every word he spoke. Often he gives us direct and formal argument, as that the disciples are guiltless in eating the ears of corn, or that Satan is not casting out Satan; and he argues even where he does not seem to argue. He does not throw down his teaching and say, There, take it or leave it. Every sentence seems to say, Judge for yourselves, and judge the righteous judgment, for you see that my words are words of truth and goodness. You know what they mean as well

as you know what the cloud on the western sea means. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin." Everywhere he takes for granted that whether or no men could have found out the truth for themselves, they are very well able to recognize it when it is put before them. Everywhere he appeals to reason, though I grant not to mere logic; and if reason is not able to answer his call, his teaching is reduced at once to a mass of nonsense.

It is the same in the Old Testament. It is always, Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. The first commandment reasons, how he brought them out from the land of Egypt and the house of bondmen: and to reason God commits his cause without reserve. Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. Hear now, O house of Israel; is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? In the glorious judgment scene of Ps. l., Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: there shall go before him a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him: yet even there he does not simply lay down the law, but reasons with his people.

Now this continual appeal to reason is of the very essence of the Gospel. The old Deists were not entirely wrong when they spoke of Natural Religion as the necessary foundation and the proper test of a revelation: only the real Natural Religion is not a creed about a God and a future life, but a sense of duty, and of right and wrong. Man is the image of

God; and however that image is dimmed by sin, it is not destroyed. Were man utterly depraved, it would be useless for God to reason with him. He might raise him by a stroke of power; but that stroke would utterly shatter the freedom which makes him better than the beasts. We must have God's truth within us, if we are to recognize God's truth without us. All experience confirms the assumption of the Gospel, that if only we are willing to judge the righteous judgment, we can very well judge of right and wrong in spite of sin. Even the sinner knows goodness when he sees it, however he may hate it. Even the sinner can burn with righteous indignation against the sins of other men. The drunkard scorns the coward, and the selfish schemer can take up his parable against the drunkard.

Here is the fundamental error of all the forms of religion which try to rest on authority instead of reason. They try to cut away all possibility of real knowledge and belief. We cannot know a thing unless reason compares it with ideas we have already. We compare a new metal with our ideas of colour, of hardness, of weight, and so on. We compare somebody's conduct with our ideas of right and wrong. So we must compare the revelation with all our ideas which bear on it: and unless we do this, we cannot know whether it is true or false, or have any real belief or disbelief at all. So every form of religion which forbids us to do this does its best to make faith the assent to things not proved, the evidence of things

not true. We have no business to believe the Lord himself without regard to reason. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin."

Now that I have claimed for reason that it is the only test we have or can have of truth, I must explain two points I have already hinted. For one of them, I do not believe that reason can be trusted to discover God's truth—only to recognize it when set before us, and that only when we are willing to see truth. My second point is even more important. Though the appeal is always to reason, we must remember that there is always something behind logic. And that something is not recondite learning. The decisive question of the Gospel is, What think ye of Christ? And though learning may help, it is not learning which answers, My Lord and my God. That is the answer of reason, for the whole man speaks through reason. Reason is not one power amongst others: it is rather the voice through which all the powers of heart and soul and mind must speak. The appeal is not to reasoning as if the Gospel were a mere affair of logic; it is rather through reason to all the powers of man which speak through reason. We need them all. We need the soul that seeks for goodness and the heart which feels it as well as the mind which recognizes it.

Let me put this yet again, that there may be no mistake. I am as far as possible from denying that the light of love divine will commonly first dawn on

the loving heart. Certain it is that if the heart is not touched sooner or later, there can be no confession unto salvation. But the confession before men is needed too, and only reason can make that confession. It will not always be put into a formal creed, but it must always be a confession of the love of truth; and for us Christians it must be full adoring love of him who is the Truth—not as abstract truth alone, but as the supreme and final guide of life. That confession will not always be a bold declaration in the face of danger, though sometimes it must be. Often it may be the quiet witness of a life that is given to Christ in simple and adoring love. It is love, not logic, that stirs this world; and it is love, not logic, which has the promise of the other world. It is as the Lord has told us, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."





**VIII.**  
**HOPE.**

“ But now abideth . . . hope.”—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

## VIII.

### HOPE.<sup>1</sup>

I HAVE torn these words out of a familiar context, because it is of hope I wish to speak, though truly faith, hope, and love are no more than aspects of the one life in Christ which is life eternal here on earth.

Nobody can read his Bible to much purpose without seeing that hope is a chief part of godliness. Hope was the very life of Israel. "Our fathers hoped in thee. The Lord will be the hope of his people, the confidence of the ends of the earth." And if the old fire of hope burned low in the ages of Pharisaic formalism, it blazed out again more brightly than ever when Christ our Lord brought life and immortality to light. Christ in us is the hope of glory, the one living power that could overcome the disgust and loathing of that hard old pagan world where hope was lost. And if its brightness was dimmed again in the dark times of Christian Pharisaism, it was never quite extinguished. Beyond the *Dies iræ* rose *Jerusalem the golden*.

The Gospel never looks on hope as an accident of

<sup>1</sup> St. John's College, Cambridge, May 8, 1904 (Commemoration Sermon).

health or temper, but as a primary duty. Want of hope is not a natural weakness, but a deep estrangement from Christ; for no man who has tasted the good word of God and the powers of a world to come can want for hope, unless he fall away. The victory of faith which overcometh the world is no more than the natural working of the triumphant hope and overflowing thankfulness without which Christian life is not itself. The vilest sin is not more unbelieving than the cultured cynicism which knows the world too well forsooth to cherish hope, and shuts its eyes to the powers not of this world working in it.

Yet even the devil of cynicism bears witness that there is a false hope, as well as a false faith and a false love. Hope sustains the sinner, that God has forgotten, that he will never see it. Hope puffs up the Pharisee, because he is not as other men, nor even as this publican. Hope sends many a man to gospels of reform, of commerce, of culture, of science, for the salvation which none of them can give. But false hope dreams a vain dream; true hope takes full account of truth. We ignore nothing, dissemble nothing, excuse nothing; yet we have the full assurance of hope. We know far better than the cynic how sin has enslaved ourselves, our neighbours, and the world: but we know that sin is conquered. The love of Christ which towers far above the loftiest heights of human goodness reaches also far below the lowest deeps of human sin. If the noblest of saints must always be the most abashed before the majestic

holiness of him that knew not sin, the greatest of sinners is not beyond the pleading of the infinite and boundless love and sympathy which for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven to a cross of shame. Paint your picture of the world as darkly as you please, lay on thick the colours of misery and want and vice and wrong, and add that Christendom in something like two thousand years has failed to cure it. Our hope is neither ignorant of these things nor careless of them, but triumphant over them. If the Incarnation is a fact, it must be a fact of the eternal order which reveals the meaning of the world of space and time, and gives us absolute and final certainty that in God's own good time the tangle shall be unravelled, and the wilderness of sin shall be made like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Before the one stupendous fact that the Son of God was crucified for men all hopelessness vanishes, all doubts are silenced, all murmurs die away: we can but give our life in lowly adoration and full-hearted thankfulness to him who died for us.

They know little of human nature who complain that the Gospel is full of hope. So indeed it is. There is no faith without hope, for faith is the assurance of things hoped for; no love without hope, for love hopeth all things; yet no true hope without faith to endure the unseen as seen, no true hope without love to inspire it, for only love can hope in a world of sin. How could the Gospel be otherwise than hopeful? Is not the love that beareth all things

the love that overcometh all things? Be it soon or be it late, the victory is surer than to-morrow's sunrise; and in that hope we can dare and do, and—what is harder—we can watch and wait, and suffer earthly failure like the Lord himself. What else would you have? A man cannot do common work without hope, though it be of nothing better than his daily wages; and the Gospel would be self-convicted if it called on a man for the noblest of work without kindling in him the noblest of hope. Hope is neither a natural gift nor an amiable weakness nor a selfish calculation, but the very life by which we live, in this world or another. What matters the lapse of ages to spirits like ourselves, in Christ immortal spirits, that we should greatly care to see the victory one of these days rather than the day when we shall meet and welcome our Lord returning?

If we of all men were to give up hope, the very stones would cry out. Are not these academic walls around us monuments of hope? Some of the noblest of them come down from the dark fifteenth century—the night before the dawn—when the old order was ready to vanish away, and Christendom cowered not for fear only, but for very shame before the Hussite and the Turk. Then true piety turned silently away from the houses of false holiness to build homes of learning, in sure hope that truth would not fail men like a lying church. There is no finer witness of this better spirit than that college which joins the names of the rival Queens. Our own foundress was in this

way only like the other Margaret, the mainstay and the ruin of the house of Lancaster. She grew up amid the clash of civil war, the horrors of Wakefield and Towton, the demoralizing revolutions of Barnet and Bosworth: yet two great foundations witness to this day her unshaken hope for the ages that were to follow her own outworn fifteenth century.

That ye may abound in hope, says St. Paul, hope for ourselves, hope for our neighbour, hope for the world. Be the sin of our heart what it may, and seventy times seven the falls of the past, in Christ we know that sin shall have no more dominion over us. Be the sin of our neighbour what it may, love hopeth all things, and without love we are nothing. Be the sin of the world what it may, we know who came to take it away. His hand is not shortened, that he cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear the great and bitter cry that cometh up from earth to heaven. You may give up hope when the Saviour of the world confesses himself defeated, and all-ruling Love retires for ever baffled from the battlefield of human wickedness: but until then Christ calls you to set your hope on him, and to bear witness of it to the world.

Hope shall never fail. Hope shares the prerogative and dignity of love, to stand on the wreck of worlds and gaze on the eternal Face which sinners may not see and live. The works of God shall pass away. The law of decay is not more plainly written on our mortal bodies than on the mightiest star that walks



the frozen verge of heaven. Even spiritual gifts shall perish, unless faith and hope and love throw over them the asbestos robe of immortality. If prophecies there be, they shall be needed no more; if tongues there be, they shall cease; if knowledge there be, it shall be needed no more: but hope along with faith and love abideth evermore. There is room and work for hope even in the world where we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. If heaven is not poorer than earth, there must be unmeasured room for hope in revelations far beyond all that sinners can ask or think—revelations rising through the years of eternity, but always revelations of our heavenly Father's love in Christ.

**IX.**  
**IDOLS.**

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”—1 JOHN v. 21.

## IX.

### IDOLS.<sup>1</sup>

THESE would seem to be the last words of Scripture that were written, the last charge of the last apostle, the last solemn warning in which the Holy Spirit sums up the Gospel for all generations. Yet they sound strange. Surely we have no idols. What need have we of such a charge as this?

Not much, if wood and stone are needed to make an idol: but if we are putting anything whatever in God's place, we are not so clear. Some calling themselves Christians have worshipped saints on every high hill and under every green tree; some have made the church an idol, and some the Bible; some have made money their god, others have worshipped success, and others have sold themselves for pleasure. All these and more are glanced at by St. John: but his thought is deeper than this.

What account does the Gospel give of itself? What is it, on its own shewing? It is a revelation, and first a revelation of this world's true estate and order. It is this world's truth which it reveals, this world's life it fills with glory. Mean and prosaic as

<sup>1</sup> Girton College, August 13, 1905 (Women's Summer Meeting).

our lives may seem, eternal issues rest on them. As every candle flashes out its light to the furthest stars of heaven, so every thought of ours must echo through the boundless deeps of the eternal world around us, as day by day we spell out one more letter of the decision for the day of doom. Ever if the lips that speak it are divine, they can declare only that which we ourselves have written.

Christ came, as he said, to bear witness to the truth ; and his coming is the absolute and final proof of that goodness of God without which all thought is meaningless. This is the truth revealed in Christ ; and he was not its witness only, but its living centre, the living Truth in whom heaven and earth consist and have their being. He was himself the revelation : yet was he its witness also, the Faithful and True.

But if he was faithful and true, what manner of persons ought we to be ? Each one of us bears some word of God, has work for God no other living person can do. We may not know what the message is ; but we shall give it truly if we have received the love of truth. Now truth is less in words and deeds than in the thought behind them. A man of science worthy of his calling is a good sample of truth in thought. He spares no pains in searching out his facts, takes them all into account, allows nothing to bias him, and refuses to go a step beyond the evidence before him. His one desire is to see the thing exactly as it is. So far as it goes, the scientific spirit is the Christian spirit. We have only to take in the moral

facts, and go on with unflinching truthfulness to the moral questions. But the moral facts touch us closely, and sorely tempt us to cloke our sins or find excuses for unrighteous judgment. Even sincerity is not enough. It is not enough to say and do nothing but what you believe to be true and right. How did you get that belief? You must answer quite as much for the way you got it as for the use you make of it. If you have shut your eyes to things you ought to have seen, you are guilty before the Lord of truth. If you took up what you are pleased to call your creed at random, like the suicides who go over to Rome to get rid of the trouble of thinking, it is no belief at all. It is pure scepticism, with a rag of self-will to cover its nakedness. Truth is not what we choose to believe, but what we win for ourselves in wrestling with God. We may hear the witness of others, but the truth will never be ours till we have won it for ourselves. The idea that we can live on spiritual truth taken on authority is the idlest of idle dreams. The aim of all good teaching is that the learner should be able to see the truth for himself. No zeal, no good works, no pleading of authority, no professions of humility, can absolve us from the duty of striving with all our power to make sure that our beliefs are true.

The love of truth is not inborn in the natural man. He likes his own ways best, and has to learn from the trials of life that God's ways are not our ways, and need to be searched out with loving patience.

Pride and partizanship, sloth, timidity, and all the forms of worldly self-love are not to be overcome without serious effort. We are all on the side of truth—at least we all say so—but it does not follow that we are lovers of truth. Here is the moral value of our daily work. The easiest lesson in the school of truth is to do that work in the spirit of truth. Petty as it may seem, it is the earthward end of a ladder that reaches up to heaven. It is a greater work to give the cup of cold water than raise the dead. Our single duty here on earth is to bend all our heart and all our soul and all our mind to the single task of learning the love of truth, for the love of truth is the love of God.

But is that so? you ask. If the love of truth is everything, what room is left for purity and gentleness, humility and unselfishness? What has the love of truth to do with these? Much every way, I answer; for all sin is an untruth, a defiance of the true order of earth and heaven. In one of Hort's great sayings, Every thought which is base or vile or selfish is first of all untrue. These are the idols from which we have to keep ourselves. Whatever you think of God in your inmost heart, you will live accordingly. Whatever idol you make him into, that idol will make you like itself.

It is not by learning nor by culture nor even by worship that we come to the knowledge of God. The utmost which even worship can do is to cleanse us for our higher duties—those duties of common life in

which our God reveals himself, in joy and sorrow, in sickness and in health alike. Even the Supper of the Lord would be a mockery, if Christ were not as near us in every other work of truth we do. Only be true, true in every fibre of your being; and truth of thought shall cleanse your eyes to see the truth of God which is the light of life.

Women as you are, you are priests of God, and prophets charged with words of truth to all around you. You need the vision of glory, and the coal of fire to touch your lips, before you take the name of truth upon them. He that sitteth on the high and lofty throne is he that is true, the faithful witness and the firstborn from the dead. Only be true; and he shall guide you safe till this world's twilight shall have passed away, and you shall see the truth you loved in all its glory, shining out in clear and vivid splendour in the light of life eternal. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.





**X.**  
**JESUS COULD NOT.**

“ And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled at their unbelief.”—MARK vi. 5.

## X.

### JESUS COULD NOT.<sup>1</sup>

I WELL remember the shock of surprise with which these words first came upon me as a boy of seven in a Leicestershire vicarage, at finding something which the Son of God was not able to do. Indeed, his power had never failed him before this in signs and wonders. He had but just rebuked the storm and cast out demons, healed the sick and raised the dead; yet the moment he comes back to his own country with all the glory of his wonders on him, he can do scarcely anything. He is checked at once, as if the powers of darkness had suddenly become too strong for him. Something of the sort it must have been, for Jesus marvelled. Once before he marvelled at the Roman centurion's faith; and only once again he marvels now at the unbelief of his own countrymen. We marvel too, but we often marvel wrongly, knowing neither the meaning of the Incarnation nor the power of God, nor even the mysterious freedom he has given us of choosing evil rather than good.

In the first place, the power upon earth of the incarnate Son of God was not unlimited. He

<sup>1</sup> Brantham, April 12, 1896.

came not hither with the glory which he had before the world was, but in form as a man, in the likeness of flesh of sin, and tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. As a Son of Man he overcame the world, as a Son of Man he did his works, and as a Son of Man he shall come to be our judge hereafter. His mighty works are signs not so much of deity as of the perfect sinless manhood which is the image of God. It may be there is none of them we could not do ourselves, if only sin had never touched us. The transfiguration itself, and even the resurrection from the dead which declared him the Son of God were (so to say) only the natural victory of sinless human nature over death. After all, the great sign he gave was not his mighty power, but his perfect love and patience. That power was only his for the work of God, not for selfish or unworthy ends. He could turn water into wine to help others, but not stones into bread to feed himself. He might wither a fig tree for a sign, but not cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to confound the unbelievers in the courts below. So it was here in his own country. The few sick folk he healed are enough to shew that his power was the same as ever. But if he had done more, he would have driven the unbelievers to choose between forced belief and fierce resistance. And this is precisely what he *could* not do.

Again, power is only a thing to be used, not one of the essentially good things like faith and love, of which

we never can have too much. Power to do the right thing is good, but all power beyond this is so much weakness. This is what we forget when we think to honour God by looking up to him as a being of unbounded power, who can do all things without let or hindrance. It is true that he governs all things, and that his word shall not return unto him void; but it is not true that God can do all things, for there are some things which we know that he cannot do. He cannot deny his own holiness. He is not a man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should repent. Aye, there is a joy of men unknown to God—the joy of sin forgiven. The mere physical power which holds the universe together might be equal to any act we can imagine; but something of his power God renounced when he created the world, and something more when he created man. He did not give him freedom with one hand only to take it away with the other. As far as man has any real power of choosing between good and evil, so far must God have renounced the power of compelling him to choose good rather than evil. In this the Incarnation makes no difference. Suppose for a moment that our Saviour's manhood was utterly unreal—the mere shape of a man and nothing more. Whatever he might have done, there is one thing we can say for certain he would not have done. He would not and could not even then have used the mighty hand and outstretched arm of deity to force belief on impenitent and unwilling men.

And this brings us to the third point I mentioned—our own mysterious power to defeat the will of God by doing evil. That power is inconceivable, so long as we think of God as mere power. Yet it is undeniable that we are doing every day the things we know he hates. His wrath is as truly revealed from heaven on all iniquity as if he rained brimstone and fire on all who stifle truth in their unrighteous doings. No, God is holiness indeed, but not mere power. Even the God who spake on Sinai is a God who sheweth mercy unto thousands of generations; and in Christ he has shewn us of his real self as light and love. Our freedom is real, and it is given us in love. He might have made us machines always doing the right thing; but then we should have been no more than machines. It was not machines that he wanted, but men in his own image who could see his glory and return his love, and be with him for ever. No forced hallelujahs does he ask of us, but a willing offering and a service which is perfect freedom. And for us freedom to do right means also freedom to do wrong. If man is to obey freely, he must also be free to disobey. This is what I glanced at when I said that all power beyond the power to do the right thing is so much weakness. The highest state we can imagine—the state we hope to reach in the other life—is not a state of freedom. It is not a state where we have to strive with painful efforts and many a failure and worse than failure after some distant goal of holiness. It is a

state where God has made our inmost nature holy like his own, a state where we live in Christ and Christ lives in us and keeps us, so that we can no more sin than he. And this is not a state of freedom, though we plainly cannot reach it but through freedom, and God has told us that he will never make us holy without an effort of our own.

Meanwhile sin is real. The freedom of the natural man is only a freedom to choose evil, for evil the natural man will always choose. He is as wholly bent on evil as the Son of Man was bent on good. Yet God has not left himself without witness in the heart of every man. Conscience speaks from deeps of your real self which sense has never fathomed; and the voice of conscience is the word of God within. You may stifle it with your untruth or drown it in the noisy clatter of your eager passions; but when it speaks again, you will hear no more its gentle pleadings with your childhood. It will speak of wrath that grows hotter and judgment that comes nearer as you harden yourself in sin. God grant you may not be able to silence his witness in you till the time when Death's cold hand shall wake you from your living death.

Of one thing be well assured. He that did no mighty works for his own countrymen will do none for you. What would be the use of them? Let him come down from the cross, said some, and we will believe; and perhaps they thought they meant it; but they were not persuaded when he rose from the dead. Forsooth



you might believe if you could choose a sign for yourself; and how much the better would you be for it, if you were still in your sins? Behold, I shew you a more excellent way. God cares not to overwhelm us with marvels, but commends to us his love, in that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. His kingdom is not a kingdom of might, but one where he that will be first must be the servant of all. Only by love serve one another, and the cup of cold water given in his name shall not be forgotten. In Christ all enemies are overcome; and he shall fill your daily life with greater works than those he could not do in his own country. Remember, for Christ has told us, that cup of cold water is a greater work than he did himself when he gave sight to the blind or life to the dead. Only watch, and be strong in faith, and thou too shalt be a light to lighten the world, and a giver of life to the dead.

**XI.**  
**CHRIST'S KINGDOM.**

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.”—  
JOHN xviii. 36.

## XI.

### CHRIST'S KINGDOM.<sup>1</sup>

YOU must notice carefully the difference between the two trials of our Lord. Before the high priest he is accused of blasphemy, in making himself the Son of God, and condemned on his own avowal of the charge. Then they take him to Pilate, because they cannot put him to death without the governor's authority. But they drop the charge of blasphemy—Pilate was not likely to listen to it—and bring a new one of treason—of making himself a king, a king of the Jews. It was a simple charge enough; yet Pilate must have seen at a glance that there was something behind it. What were those Pharisees doing in the crowd? Had they suddenly become lovers of Cæsar? Pilate feels doubtful, and proceeds to question the prisoner. "Art thou the king of the Jews?" The answer practically asks what he means: "Is this your own question about treason, or is it a form of words others have put into your mouth?" Plainly the latter. Then came the decisive words, "My kingdom is not of this world." He is a king then, but not a rival of Cæsar; and this he shews in

<sup>1</sup> Brantham, April 16, 1897 (Good Friday).

a way Pilate would understand. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." In fact, they all offered to fight, and Peter did fight, and would have made it impossible for our Lord to say this, if he had not been stopped at once. But the story of Malchus was not one the Jews could bring to the governor's ears.

A few more words, and Pilate saw plainly that he had no practical question of treason before him. It was not indeed very clear what the prisoner meant by still calling himself a king, and talking about truth, as if truth had something or other to do with the matter; but there was no doubt at all about the question Pilate had to deal with. Whatever Jesus of Nazareth might be, he was not making himself a king in the sense that concerned Cæsar.

If Pilate could see what Jesus was not doing, we can see what he was doing. He was setting up a new kind of kingdom on the face of the earth. The old kingdoms of the East, the kingdoms of a Sennacherib or a Nebuchadnezzar, were kingdoms of naked force, which only kept their subjects in obedience by wholesale slaughters and captivities. Even Rome began in this way, with very little thought of duty to the world she had conquered: but now she was beginning to rule the nations for their own good, and not for selfish gain. She was beginning to lose herself in the world, that the world might become Roman. She gave it peace, and law, and order, and the rest of the good gifts of civilization: yet surely

something was lacking yet. All her power was weak to lighten the miseries of life, and all her wisdom failed her in the face of death. Even Rome's was not a throne of righteousness. Neither she nor any other kingdom ever could turn a world of selfish men into a world of peace and holiness.

Neither could the Lord himself. It must cease to be a world of selfish men before there could be peace or holiness. The weak kings who ruled by the might of armies must give place to the strong king who ruled by the might of loving service. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your bondman." This was the truth which Rome was feeling after in her pagan darkness. She was beginning to see that selfishness would not answer in the state—that she must lose her life in the world before she could win a world-wide life. But the boldest of Roman statesmen never ventured further. The wisdom of the world never ventured on the daring thought which lay next, that self-sacrifice is not the law of empire only, but the law of life itself. "He that loveth his life is destroying it; and he that loseth his life in this world, to life eternal shall he keep it."

This is the right by which Jesus of Nazareth so calmly claimed to be not only king of the Jews, but king of the world. Not by might, for he was no Barabbas to make insurrection, nor by learning, for he was no Gamaliel to bandy questions of mint and

anise and cumin, nor even as the Son of God, for that is not in question here; but as the Son of Man who for us men and our salvation stooped lower than any man, even from the throne of heaven to the malefactor's cross of shame. As the Saviour of the world, he is its rightful king, and the owner of the nations he has purchased with his blood.

This then is a new sort of kingdom. It comes not from this world but from heaven; not with the shouting of the crowd, but in the silence of our hearts. It governs not by soldiers and police without, but by conscience and love within. It rules not over deeds and words only, but over the thoughts and intents of the heart. Its laws are not the decrees of a mortal king, but revelations of eternal truth. Its people are of all nations, for there is none left out but he that shuts himself out; and of all generations, for there is no death in it. Its citizenship is not to be won by wealth or learning, but by purity and willing service. Its nobility is not of rank and title, but of purer heart and harder service; and its rewards are not of the gewgaws of orders and decorations, but of glory and honour and immortality, and beyond all these the crown of life that fadeth not away.

How did he win his kingdom? Not by pride and self-will, for even Christ pleased not himself, but by obedience even to death and shame. For our sakes he became poor, and made himself of no reputation, and ministered to us, and laid down his life for us. No man ever carried out like the Lord himself his

own command, Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your bondman. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and made him both Lord and Christ, and given him a kingdom that shall not pass away, and a dominion that shall not be abolished.

For whom did he win it? Not for himself only, but for every one that is of the truth, and hears his voice. He has brought us out of the darkness and misery of sin to share his kingdom with him; for he has made us not citizens and subjects only, but kings and priests. Through the shame of the cross we see not forgiveness only, but a higher glory for us than that of angels.

The kingdom is his gift; and yet we must win it for ourselves. It is freely given—no price and no condition—only we must rouse ourselves and count the cost before we can take it from his hand. We must strive as he strove, and be obedient as he was obedient, and call on him for grace to help in time of need.

For Christ is not a mere example to us, or we should still be in our sins. That scene on Golgotha is not an antiquated story, but one that will touch our inmost life. *How*, is more than we know. We are plainly told indeed that it is a true atonement for our sins and the sins of the whole world; but how it works is not revealed to us. Perhaps we could not understand it; in any case it is something we do not need to know. But the practical side is plain enough to those who have felt the power of life which



comes from the Lord who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore. We know that the barrier of sin is broken down, and that our Father's love flows freely to us, and calls out our own to answer it. True, the natural man will answer with a curse; but every one that is of the truth will welcome the kingdom of truth which is not of this world. He will not fight against the love of Christ, but give himself up to it, and let it sink into him and cleanse his heart that he may be able to see the kingdom of God, and to enter into it, and to take the place in it that shall be given him among the kings and priests whom Christ has redeemed and made his own for ever.

XII.

THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON  
IMMORTALITY,

“This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”—1 Cor. xv. 53.

## XII.

### THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY.<sup>1</sup>

THE centre of the world's long history is Christ our Saviour's resurrection from the dead. Through the endless ages of the past, the old natural creation was preparing for and pointing forward to the divine Redeemer's coming ; and through the endless ages of the future, the new spiritual creation will still draw its life and power from the resurrection of the Son of Man.

I say the resurrection of the Son of Man ; for it was not a simple conquest of Satan by the Son of God, or a simple baffling of the powers of the grave which might have held him captive. All this it was, but more than this. It would be no concern of ours, if it were not also the resurrection of the Son of Man. It is the victory of love that beareth all things, the victory of faith which overcometh all things ; yet it is the victory of one who shared our human weakness, and was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven and lived among men, and

<sup>1</sup> Brantham, April 18, 1897 (Easter Day).

bore their sorrows and their sin. For us men and for our salvation he refused the glorious transfiguration where Moses and Elijah waited on him, and chose the cross of shame, to make atonement for the sin of the world. Therefore also hath the Father raised him up, to be the firstborn from the dead, and the first-fruits of them that slept.

For mark : it is not simply the rising of a common man like other men : it is the resurrection of the Son of Man in whom are treasured all the powers of the life that now is, and of the life that is to come. The life of earth is his creation, and the life of heaven flows from him. In our natural life, and yet more in our spiritual life, we are members of Christ ; for he is the head, and the beginning of the creation of God. If it was not possible for the sinless Son of Man to be holden of the pains of death, neither was it possible for the risen Son of Man to win his victory for himself alone. He is gone up on high like a king in the day of his power, with a mighty train of captives. The conquered powers of death and hell are in his following ; and with him go the living thousands of the Lord's redeemed with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Mark well the daring confidence of these tremendous words. There is hope of a tree if it be cut down ; but man when he dieth, where is he ? Yet against the fixed unbroken law of Nature that in Adam all die, he sets his fixed

unshaken certainty that in Christ shall all be made alive. And this is not only a thing that shall be, but a thing that must be, for in the light of Christ's resurrection we can see its necessity. If Christ our head is risen indeed, we his members cannot for ever sleep in death. Christ will raise us up, both bad and good; and then will come the great separation—the wheat to the barn, the tares to the fire.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” This robe of mortal flesh was only lent us for awhile, as we pass the narrow strait between God's world from which we came, and God's world to which we go. Then shall we be clothed upon with the robe of immortality. The body which shall rise and live for ever is not that body which thou sowest. It is not that body that we lay in the earth, worn out with sin and sickness. It is not the old seed which springs up from the earth, but the fresh plant it bore within. So from the womb of the grave shall come the immortal body whose germ we cherish now. It will come at the archangel's call; but none the less it will be the natural result which the laws of God are unfolding from the life we live in this world. Whatever it be, that is the body in which we shall have to face the judgment of the world where there is no more time.

It is natural and right that we should desire to know something of the processes and changes by which this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. If this is one of the many

things which are not revealed, because it was not good that God should tell us them, we need not therefore fear that we shall do wrong in trying to search it out for ourselves. All things are ours if we are Christ's ; and every mystery of earth and heaven is freely given to us, to find out so much of it as we can. Peradventure science will one day throw some glimmerings of light on this : but meanwhile Scripture deals with something that concerns us now, and in a far more practical way. If Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept, it follows that we who are his must pass through some such change as he passed through. We sinners dare not hope that our change will be quite the same as his who knew no sin ; yet some such change we know it must be. If the life of Christ that liveth in us is a truth and no delusion, it must be life indeed ; and the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, he that raised up his Christ from the dead will also quicken our mortal bodies. Because his Spirit dwelleth in us, he will not leave our soul in the grave, nor suffer those who in Christ are holy to dwell for ever with corruption.

Our Saviour's resurrection is not the solitary fact it seems at present. It only stands alone because, out of all the millions who have tasted death, none but he has yet been raised from the dead to die no more. Enoch and Elijah never saw death, and Lazarus only returned to common life. And it shall not for ever stand alone. Christ is the firstborn among many

brethren; and his resurrection is the assurance for them all. In Christ the love that is stronger than death for the first time put forth the fulness of its power: and one day this power shall reach to all that are his. How these things shall come to pass, it doth not yet appear; yet something of it we can see. Christ learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and the captain of our salvation was made perfect by suffering. He was not glorified till his human training was completed. So must it be with us. We too must suffer a while and be made perfect, before the God who hath called us to his eternal glory shall raise us up together with him and make us to sit in the heavenly places with him. We must be like him here on earth, and walk as he walked, in gentleness and truth, in patience and in love unfeigned, and purify ourselves even as he is pure at the right hand of God: then when he shall appear, he will draw us to him, and we shall be for ever like him, for we shall see him as he is.

But the resurrection of him who is both Son of God and Son of Man is a fact which cannot be for our salvation only, but must affect the whole of earth and heaven. These indeed are mysteries before which reason is powerless, imagination fails, and thought is lost in adoration; yet some glimpses of them are allowed us. In it we see the earnest and assurance of God's purpose to gather together again in one all things in Christ—all things which are in heaven and earth. Not the elect only, nor even all men, but all



things, from the archangel to the stones we tread on. From him they came, in him they are, and to him they shall return. In him the old heavens and the earth we see consist and have their being; in him all sickness is healed, all discord reconciled; in him the new heavens and the new earth we look for shall find their eternal peace and harmony.

**XIII.**  
**THE HOPE OF ZACHARIAS.**

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel : for he hath visited and redeemed his people.”—LUKE i. 68.

### XIII.

#### THE HOPE OF ZACHARIAS.<sup>1</sup>

**Z**ACHARIAS the priest and his wife Elisabeth had grown up from their youth, walking in blameless righteousness before the Lord, and waiting in their childless home for the mercy he had promised to their fathers. But the voice of prophecy had been silent for many a long year since Malachi's last words, that God would send them an Elijah before the great and dreadful day, lest he come and smite the earth with a curse. Many a Gentile conqueror had swept over the mountains of Judah; and now the nation was far sunk in Pharisaic formalism, with Cæsar's yoke heavy on its neck. Five generations before, another old priest, Mattathias of Modin, had roused Israel to the noblest struggle in all its history: but no such call as that was sent to Zacharias, to be a nation's leader; and he was not one of the zealots who debased God's promised mercy into mere revenge on Gentiles. Years passed on, and still no prophet came. The old couple could only wait and ponder still. A few more years of quiet walk with God, and they would pass to the land where all things are forgotten.

<sup>1</sup> Oulton, September 5, 1897.

As the lightning shineth from heaven, so came the message to them that they were still to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. The silence of ages was broken. From the midst of the cloud of incense that filled the sanctuary God's angel spake to Zacharias as he spake to them of old. His prayer is heard, and a sign is given. The reproach of Elisabeth shall be taken away, for a child of their own is the Elijah that was for to come. Then for long speechless months the old priest is left to ponder yet again the ripening promise, confirmed by the still more wonderful tidings that came with Mary from Nazareth of Galilee. At last his mouth is opened in the day of joy and gladness, and the thoughts of a lifetime burst out in thanksgiving. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people." The hope of Zacharias for God's people is some such quiet life as his own, of holiness and righteousness before the Lord; but with no enemy to make them afraid, and with the dayspring from on high to give them light. No more fightings without or fears within; but the knowledge of salvation to cover the land, the remission of sins to fill our hearts with gladness, and the peace of God to rest on us all the days of our life.

A lovely vision truly, though it does not reach Simeon's lofty thought, of a light to lighten the Gentiles also. But what was the reality, when Zacharias was gone to his rest? His Elijah was killed as the prophets before him were killed; and

the greater than Elijah that came after him came like a disinherited king. The crown they gave him was a crown of thorns, and for his throne he had a cross of shame, in the day when Israel renounced his king. So the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, and he gave them into the hand of the Romans, to destroy their city and to burn with fire the house of their sanctuary, and to blot out Israel's name from among the nations. All history can shew no more appalling contrast to the peaceful grandeur of the psalm of Zacharias.

But the vision is not therefore false. The very sign of a prophet is faith to look through the blackness of darkness around him to the flush of the dawn on the far-away mountains. Prophecy is not a horoscope by which they that are cunning can foretell the destiny of nations. Its work is to set history and common life in the light of eternity, and to shew the tossings of their miry sea of wickedness all guided by a providence that never faileth to the final summing up in Christ. Therefore prophecy has no perspective. Its light shines alike through past and future, through near and far alike; and to it the night is as clear as the day. It is like a dissolving view. We gaze it may be on Joshua's conquests, or the destruction of Sennacherib's host, or the judgment of Jerusalem: but the longer we look, the clearer looms out its mighty background of the ages in their courses gathering round the glorious form of him that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore.

So here the prophet Zacharias lifts up his eyes from the darkness and shadow of death around him to the dawning light. Its noonday splendour might be near, it might be far away: but as the Lord liveth, his promise is surer than to-morrow's sunrise. Be it soon or be it late, there remaineth a rest to the people of God. When Joshua bore witness, Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord hath spoken, he must have felt that even the land that flowed with milk and honey was no more than a sign and a sacrament of some better thing provided for them. The rest which Joshua could not give them must be given by a greater Joshua; for it is he shall save his people from their sins. But to Zacharias it is not given to know the times or the seasons, or how these things shall come to pass. The old man's words are all of holiness and peace, for the cross on Golgotha is hidden from his eyes. One thing he knows and is sure of: The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.

Now all these things are written for our instruction. Our good things, like Joshua's, are signs and sacraments of a glory that shall be revealed. All holy desires, all good counsels, all just works, are not only gifts of God, but promises that he will one day bring them to perfection far above all that we can ask or think. Christ came to destroy nothing at all, save the works of the devil, but to fulfil to the uttermost every dream of goodness that has ever visited the sons of men. If God is good, so must it be.

Sooner or later, his love must have its perfect victory. Yet heaven would not be heaven if it threw back no light on earth. What is told us of its glory was never meant to feed our idle curiosity and puff us up with carnal imaginations, but to strengthen us for the common duties of life by shewing us that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. Work that is done for God is never lost. Every temptation overcome, every wicked passion conquered, every little work of mercy done for Christ's sake, is one more glimpse of the eternal, one more tasting of the powers of the world to come. If "heaven lies about us in our infancy," it is also with us to old age, and in our very self, if we are in Christ.

This is the practical value of prophecy, and in fact of all Scripture—not to send us into raptures about heaven, but to make us good fathers and mothers, good sons and daughters, good neighbours and good citizens. We are told some of the secrets of another life only that we may be able to do our work in this life. When Zacharias took up his parable of peace and holiness in a time to come, was he not living in that time already? And cannot we live in it too? Heaven is not some far-off country which none of us can reach but through the flaming gateway of the day of doom. It lies around us here and now; and in this world of sin and misery its life is not refused us. Heaven is the air our spirit breathes, for all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works are something more than prophecies and promises of good



things to come. Our efforts after knowing God are weak through sin ; but Christ has told us that these efforts are themselves eternal life : and in the world where sin has passed away, the effort after knowing God shall still remain eternal life. Fightings without and fears within shall have an end, for even now their angry clamour is hushed before the still small voice in which our Saviour speaks to us of patience for a season. Then, when we have cast all our cares on him that careth for us, the Lord of Peace shall give us peace on earth, and the peace that passeth understanding shall keep our hearts and minds as well for this present life as for the life that endeth nevermore.

**XIV.**  
**THOMAS.**

“Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?”—JOHN xiv. 5.

## XIV.

### THOMAS.<sup>1</sup>

SOME common ideas about our Lord's disciples are strangely mistaken. We set them down as arrant cowards because they all forsook him and fled, though they had just offered to throw away their lives for him by trying to fight five hundred Roman soldiers. We read something about love in St. John, and straightway transfer to him the gentleness which more properly belongs to St. Paul, quite forgetting the terrible sternness of his quiet words. So when we read that Thomas doubted, we set him down as one of our sceptics who will not believe till they have seen a miracle with their own eyes.

Now Thomas was just what some of our triflers would like to be thought—a sober truthful man who insists on facing the facts he sees before he goes a step further. Such a man is slow to move: no passing enthusiasm can stir him, only the gravest sense of duty. And faith is none the worse for counting the cost before it gives itself to Christ. When Wellington saw a man turn pale as he marched up to a battery, "That is a brave man. He knows

<sup>1</sup> Brantham, April 17, 1898.

his danger, and faces it notwithstanding." Such a man is Thomas when we first hear him speak. When the others try to hinder our Lord from going into Judæa, where the Jews had sought to stone him, it is Thomas who answers with quiet courage, Let us also go, that we may die with him. So in the supper chamber, when our Lord speaks of going away; while Peter breaks in impatiently, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? Thomas reasons it out soberly, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?

Now what was such a man likely to be doing after the crucifixion? It is a striking touch of nature in the Gospels, that while the chief priests understood our Lord's words about rising again the third day, his own disciples never realized them at all. That be far from thee, was the thought of their heart when he spoke of suffering to come. They clung to the earthly presence, and were confounded when it was taken away from them. Thomas must have felt even more keenly than the others the awful reality that Jesus whom they loved was dead. There was no glossing over that fact. It had cost him more than it would have cost a lighter nature to give up all for Christ; and here it had all ended in hopeless disappointment.

Then in the dawning of that first glorious Easter morning comes the news that the great stone is rolled away, and the sepulchre is empty. Away fly Peter and John to see for themselves, with Mary of Magdala following. The two disciples were convinced by what

they saw, Mary by the well-known voice which spoke to her; and when the Lord had been seen first of Cephas, then of the Twelve that night, all doubting was for ever silenced among them. They knew that the thing was true, and that the Lord they loved was risen indeed, and is alive for evermore.

Yet there was one heart still comfortless. Thomas was not with them that night of gladness. Such a man as he, who never cared to go a step further than he could see clearly, would prefer to wrestle alone with sorrow. In vain they told him, We have seen the Lord. He was too true to pretend belief when he was not convinced. The print of the nails and the gash of the spear were hard facts which as it seemed no hearsay stories could undo. Nothing but the touch of his own hands could assure him that it was indeed the Lord.

All this looks very like the Pharisees asking a sign from heaven; but it is not really so. Would those Pharisees have believed, if they had got their sign? But Thomas means what he says. He is open to conviction, but sees only one sign that seems convincing. Facts needed facts to overcome them, and this was the only test he could think of. He is not really insisting on a sign of his own choice; only forgetting the chief part of the evidence before him. He is too bewildered to look behind that single scene on Golgotha. Signs of love, signs of power, signs of prophecy, go for nothing before that single fact of death. He never asks, Ought not the Christ to

have suffered these things? We must not take too literally the words of such a man at such a time, as if positively nothing but actual touch would convince him. So he fancied: but there was one who knew him better. Next Sunday the risen Lord took Thomas at his word. "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands, and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side; and become not faithless, but believing." He was not faithless yet; but here was the test.

Can you imagine that he needed to do as he had said? Not he, when once he sees the well-known form, and hears the well-known voice again. Up he springs, his own words flung to the winds, and every doubt dispelled for ever, with his adoring confession, My Lord and my God. It is the climax of the Gospel of St. John. He has led us from confession to confession, steadily upward from Nathanael to Peter, from Peter to Martha, and now from Martha to these culminating words of Thomas. With these he stops, as though his work was done when the loftiest confession of all burst out from the soberest and most cautious of the Twelve.

And to these words of Thomas all Christian life must come. We know well enough what we ought to do. What can be simpler than to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? But where in the wide world shall we find strength to do it? It is not enough to hear of Christ, or to confess him along with others as our Lord and our God. The belief of others will do you no good, for

no truth is truly yours till you have made it yours by labour and toil, and found its echo in your own heart. You are not truly Christ's till you let the world drop out of sight, and take him for your own with the apostle's cry, My Lord and my God. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on earth there is none that I desire beside thee. This is the cry which the Saviour delights to hear; and in it you shall find for yourself a never failing well of life, and a never failing stream of blessing for those around you.





**XV.**

**THE WOMAN THAT WAS A  
SINNER.**

“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”—LUKE vii. 47.

## XV.

### THE WOMAN THAT WAS A SINNER.<sup>1</sup>

SOME of the most exquisite stories in the Gospels are told us only by St. Luke, such as the raising of the widow's son at Nain, or the parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus, of the Prodigal, or of the Good Samaritan. And among them all, the story of the woman that was a sinner is unsurpassed in tenderness and beauty.

There was a Pharisee named Simon, and one day he asked Jesus to meat in his house. Now Simon was not a scheming enemy, but a friend of a cold sort, and none too civil. However, Jesus went in and sat, or rather lay down, for they did not sit on chairs as we do, but lay across broad couches, so that his feet were clear on the side of the couch away from the table. Then came in a woman that was a sinner in the city. People often do come in from the street without offence in the East; but it was a bold thing for a woman and a well-known sinner to come into a Pharisee's house. However, she brought a box of ointment, and stood over his feet to anoint them; but instead of doing this, she bursts into tears of

<sup>1</sup> Colwich, September 3, 1899.

passionate repentance. Then she does a thing which some of Simon's friends would have thought as bad as any of her sins. She let down her hair, though it was thought disgraceful for a woman to be seen with her hair down, and dried his feet with it. So she remained, kissing them and anointing them with ointment.

Simon says nothing—he is not rude enough for that—but his thought is, This man does not know, or perhaps does not care what sort of a woman is clinging to him; so he cannot be a prophet. Jesus, however, soon shews him something that he does know. “Simon, I have something to say to thee.” “Say on, rabbi.” “A money-lender had two debtors, and one owed him ten times as much as the other. As they could not pay, he freely forgave them both. Which then of them will love him more than the other?” Not a very interesting question for Simon: however, “I suppose the one to whom he forgave more.” Quite right, answers the Lord; for Simon has fairly convicted himself. Jesus turns round to the woman, as he says to Simon, Do you see this woman? Then he tells him how she has done for him all the duties of common civility which Simon has neglected, and something more than all of them. Simon gave him no water to wash his feet—this is needed in countries where they wear no boots—but she has washed them with her tears, and even dried them with her hair. Simon should have given him the kiss of peace, and he might have done it on the hand if he had wanted

to be very civil indeed ; but she has never ceased passionately kissing his feet. Simon had not anointed his head even with common oil, as the custom was ; but she has anointed his feet with costly ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins have been forgiven—those many sins you are thinking of, for she loved much ; but he to whom little is being forgiven, the same loveth little.

But what does this mean ? Is it that her sins have been forgiven as a reward for her great love ? Some take it so ; but they are certainly wrong. The point of the parable is not that the debtor was forgiven because he loved his creditor, but that he will love him after he is forgiven ; the point of the next words is not that he who loves little will get little forgiveness, but that he who is forgiven only a little will not love much ; and the point of our Lord's last words to the woman is that her faith has saved her, not her love. In every case the forgiveness comes first, and after it the love. Our Lord means that love is not the cause of forgiveness, but the sign by which we know it. He reasons thus—you know that her sins are many ; yet you see that her love is great. How can this be, unless her sins have been forgiven ? Forgiveness is needed to account for her change from a state of sin to a state of love.

And so it is with all of us. We are told indeed to work out our own salvation, but never to work for our forgiveness. *That* is given once for all in Christ already, forgiveness full and free ; so that it is too

late to bargain about it with God, even if we sinners had something to offer for it. Yet this is the inveterate mistake of the natural man. He will not simply take his forgiveness, but looks about for something to buy it with. He is ashamed to appear before God in the nakedness of sin, so he puts on some decent rags of his own righteousness—there are plenty of them in the devil's wardrobe. When God calls him, he answers that he is really not fit to come just now; but when he has done a reasonable part of the work himself, he will come to God to get it finished. Now the beauty of this is that he never does manage to do any part of the work himself; and it is the merest delusion to fancy that he can. The Pharisees of all ages have tried that plan, and it has never answered. Even Saul of Tarsus could not work it.

No: God never laid on us this task of overcoming sin by ourselves. He never sent us into the battle with nothing but the timid virtues of the natural man to fight withal against the passions of the flesh, the deceitfulness of the world, and the wiles of the devil. The sword of our good intentions will be shivered in the battle, and the fiery darts of unbelief will pierce the armour of our pride. Yet strength, abundant strength, is ready, if we will only ask for it. If God calls us, let no man think himself unfit to come at once. The weaker, the meaner, the viler he feels himself before Christ's majestic holiness, so much the fitter he is to pray the prayer of faith which no man ever prayed in vain—God be merciful to me a sinner.

The woman was not forgiven because her sins were many, as if the greatest sinner straightway made the greatest saint, but because she truly felt herself a sinner, and truly desired the forgiveness which God is more ready to give than we to ask for.

Once for all get rid of the Pharisee's idea that forgiveness is a thing to be won by toil. It is not the far-away goal of the Christian life, but the gracious gift with which we start—a gift whose fulness unfolds through love in righteousness and peace and joy, as fast as we are able to bear the glory it reveals. In our own strength we can do nothing; but forgiveness fills our souls with the love that overcometh all things.

Many a year has come and gone since Jesus was at meat in the Pharisee's house; but the memory of the woman that was a sinner shall never perish. We can think of no higher blessing than that which the Lord pronounced on her—Go, and enter into peace; thy faith hath saved thee—and that is the blessing he gives to every sinner of the sons of men who truly turns to him.





**XVI.**  
**ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.**

“And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”—**MATT. xxv. 46.**

## XVI.

### ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.<sup>1</sup>

IT is not entirely of my own motion that I take up the dread subject of eternal punishment, but at the wish of some present here. Such a call Christ's minister may not refuse, for he is bound to declare the whole counsel of God to the utmost of his power. May the Lord of all truth, before whom we meet this day, direct our hearts on this tremendous question.

Let us begin with one general thought. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is an old truth of Scripture and Nature which our fathers knew: yet Science in these latter days has thrown on it a light our fathers never saw. If there is another world at all, we need no message from heaven to tell us that our lot in it must be the natural consequence of our doings in this world. It is no mere decree which joins good and bad in this world with weal and woe in that. We cannot imagine it otherwise, for the necessity lies in God's own nature. Just as we leave this world, so must we enter that, and take the place in it for which we have made ourselves fit. If you are fit for the blessing of

<sup>1</sup> Brantham, March 20, 1898.

the righteous, you shall stand with them before the throne ; and if you are fit to be with the devil and his angels, with the devil and his angels must your portion be. And if there is fitness in this, there is also mercy ; for heaven itself would be the deepest hell of all for the man that loves not God. But the sentence that shall be pronounced is our own decision, though the speaker is the Lord in glory. Whatever be the punishment of the wicked, it must be the natural consequence of his wickedness.

But what shall it be ? The words of Scripture are full of terror ; and their terror is only heightened by their studied vagueness. But once for all get rid of the common ideas of hell. It is no more full of fire than the streets of heaven are paved with gold : and if it were, it could not harm our spiritual bodies. Scripture points another way ; and so does common sense. Many a sinner here would gladly face a death of fire, if he were only sure that it would burn up the torments of remorse. And what will be our remorse when the drunkenness of sin is past—when the love of Christ we scorned is shining out, but not for us, in its unclouded splendour, and the wrath of God we set at nought is blazing down on us in all its terror ? These are the fires of hell ; and they are fires that cannot but burn as long as we sin, and cannot but cease if ever we cease from sin.

But how can they ever cease ? Does not our Lord tell us in so many words that the punishment is everlasting ? Yes, he does ; and beyond all doubt his

words are true. But are we sure what they mean? The meaning that first comes into our own heads is not always right; and "the plain meaning" is very often wrong. What can be plainer than, If a man hate not his father and mother, he cannot be my disciple? Neither will it do to take for granted that our English Bible is always exactly right. Though the translators did marvellously well in their day, on some points every scholar now can see that they were mistaken.

Our text speaks of everlasting punishment, and of life eternal; but the Greek word is the same in both, and it does not mean a thing which never ends. It is the punishment of an age, which in this case is the age to come; and it is not a punishment which lasts all through that age, but the punishment which properly belongs to it, just as other punishment (fire for example) properly belongs to this age. So too the life is the proper life of the world to come, as the Creed calls it: but our assurance that it has no end is not in the word translated eternal, but in the nature of the life itself; for the life Christ gives of his own life cannot have an end.

But in the nature of punishment there is nothing to shew that it cannot have an end. We cannot get the doctrine out of passages which speak of it as eternal or everlasting, for these always have the word which we have just seen does not mean endless. Other passages say that it is for ever, or to translate exactly, for the age; and one awful warning is of a sin that hath no forgiveness, either in this age or in

that to come: but we are told again of God's glory through all the ages, and we cannot say what splendours of it may light those further ages. Again, we hear of fires that burn continually, like the fires in the Valley of Hinnom which burned up the rubbish of Jerusalem; and these must have some tremendous meaning: but if sinners burn like rubbish, they will not burn for ever. It would be dangerous to take a literal story from the visions of St. John, as that heaven and earth fled away, and death and the grave as well as the sinners were cast into the lake of fire. Yet even here only the devil, the beast and the false prophet are expressly said to be tormented to the ages of the ages; and these surely are not sinners of mortal birth.

In fact, the word translated punishment positively will not bear the meaning of endless punishment. It is not punishment simply, but punishment that is meant to cure men of their evil ways; and this cannot last longer than the sinful temper which has to be cured, for we cannot suppose that the wrath of God will rest on a sinner for a moment after he truly turns to him, whether in this age or another.

As for the word damnation, there is no such word in the Bible. It is always either judgment or condemnation. Thus he that resisteth the ordinance of God shall receive to himself a judgment, and he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh to himself a judgment. So he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that dis-

believeth shall be condemned. The warning is terrible enough, that he shall stand guilty before the Lord whose love he scorned: but there is no word here or anywhere else of anything in the least like what is commonly meant by damnation.

We have still the question whether it is possible at all for a sinner to turn to God in that age. Scripture, I think, has no clear statement, but a good deal on both sides. If it nowhere clearly forbids hope, it nowhere clearly holds out hope, and certainly nowhere hints that we shall ever again have the opportunities we threw away in this life. But one general consideration seems decisive. We know that God's purpose is to have mercy on all men, that sin bars the way, and that he will never bring us to heaven while we are not fit for heaven. Consider now some vile and hardened sinner, as like a devil as he can make himself. That man goes (unless the Lord of truth has lied) into suffering worse than the worst of this life, where too great suffering soon breaks down the body. Now we cannot see how suffering can ever melt such a man—on earth it only made him blaspheme the more: yet if it be God's purpose to have mercy on him, we cannot imagine that purpose finally defeated by sin. Through whatever struggles and defeats, love divine must sooner or later have its perfect victory—if not in this age, then in that; and if not in that, then in some other of God's endless ages. Now I ask, is that a perfect victory which leaves a host of men and devils in unending torment,



defiant, raging, unsubdued? Even an earthly king is not quite satisfied till he has turned his rebels into loyal men. Or is it a perfect victory which simply annihilates the wicked or turns them into automatons, as if God could not manage them any longer? Lame and barren victories these, fit only for this world's tyrants. Through the lurid clouds which overhang the day of doom one fact shines out clear and certain. The love which leaves the ninety and nine will never rest while a single one of those for whom Christ's blood was shed remains an outcast from the peace of God in bliss.

Some there are who say that the fire must be unending, because nothing else will frighten men from sin. But does that frighten them? Did any man ever sin a sin the less for fear of hell? Scripture puts forward the love of Christ, not the fear of hell. Dark as the shadow is, it was never meant to fill our life with gloom. No, Christ came to fill our hearts with joy—with joy as natural as the joy of laughing children, keener than the keenest joy of earthly love. Mysterious and awful is the joy of joys, when our God has prospered us to find the lost, and bring it home to be for ever folded in the arms of Christ our Saviour's love—the love that beareth all things and abideth evermore.

**XVII.**

**BE NOT YE CALLED RABBI.**

“Neither be ye called masters : for one is your master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.”—MATT. xxiii. 10, 11, R.V.

## XVII.

### BE NOT YE CALLED RABBI.<sup>1</sup>

THE word here translated *masters* is found nowhere else in Scripture. Its rough meaning is *teachers*, so that the rough meaning of the passage is what he has said a couple of verses before. Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. There he was warning the people against the scribes and Pharisees, who through pride of learning quite mistook the duty of teachers, and made themselves lords in Israel. Now he goes further. He is not now thinking of mere teaching, but of the whole guidance of life; and therefore he uses a word of wider meaning. "Neither be ye called masters." He is not speaking here of a master who commands a servant, but a master who guides our lives. The master of a school for instance is not a mere teacher whose work is done when his boys know certain lessons. He has to train them up for goodness, to keep away bad influences, to bring out all their powers, and as far as he can to make them true and unselfish men. There is a great deal more than mere teaching in this.

<sup>1</sup> Scarning, August 28, 1898.

Now the mere fact that our Lord is speaking to the multitude as well as to his disciples is warning enough that this is not the schoolmaster's work only, but a duty that comes to all of us. And is it not so? The great and learned teacher does not stand alone in his duty to be a guide of the blind and a light of them that are in darkness, for the poorest mother in a cottage is a teacher of babes who in her measure shares his lofty calling in the sight of God. The cry for light and guidance reaches all of us, for the very children are guides of smaller children. We cannot help being guides, for the cry is none the less real if it is not put into words, and our answer is none the less effective if we give it without thinking. Example is better than precept, and what we are ourselves is always the chief part of our teaching.

Now, says our Lord, take care how you answer—rather how you answer than what you answer, for though it is important to do the right things, it is very much more important to do things in the right spirit. You seem to be guides, and in one sense you are guides; but the real guide, the teacher of teachers and the guide of all guides, is the Christ of God. He it is who guides alike both us who guide in this world and those who seem to follow us; and we are only blind guides if we cannot see this.

What then is the right spirit? Let us ask our Lord again. There is another significant change here in his language. As regards mere teaching, he thinks it enough to say, Be not ye called Rabbi, for all ye

are brethren. We are all of us learners, and the only difference among us is that some are a little further on with their lessons than others ; so we need not be puffed up. But when he comes to the wider duty of the guide, he says something more. Neither be ye called masters ; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. For the mere teacher it is enough to remember that teacher and learner are brethren ; but he that aspires to be a guide of life must stoop to be a servant of those he guides. The work is not of lordship, nor even of brotherly help, but of service ; and in the spirit of service it must be done.

Of twofold service, on one side learning wisdom from the Lord who guides ourselves, on the other teaching wisdom as well as we can to those whom God is guiding by our influence. Now what a glorious power is our influence over others, if it is the guidance Christ is giving them, and of what utter baseness are we guilty if we use it for our own selfish ends. But the devil of selfishness is the subtlest of his kind, and comes to us many a time transformed into an angel of light. Is it not the most natural thing in the world that we should strive to make our pupils like ourselves, giving them truth as we ourselves have seen it, and bringing them along the same road our God has brought ourselves ?

Yes, this is the plan of the natural man, and of the spiritual man too, whenever he forgets that "one is your Master, even the Christ." We were never given this wondrous power of influence merely that we

might shape our fellow-men in our own image, but that we might help our Lord to shape them in his own. We are not petty despots over them, but fellow-workers with Christ; and Christ's work is not for the threescore years and ten of this life, but for the life whose years shall not fail. Deep calleth unto deep—the deep of the Spirit of God without us to the deep of the Spirit of God within us. God's truth is like the great sea that never rests, yet never changes. Sometimes the sunlight rests on calm deeps of dimpled blue; then again its rolling walls of solid green are crashed on the cliffs in clouds of spray. Yet when ages are past, and many an ancient coast is covered fathoms deep, the sea is still the same, and shall be till the day of doom. Neither are God's ways like our ways, for he looketh unto the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. He maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the great waters; and again, he maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

Be not high-minded, but fear. He that has felt the mystery of God's dealings with himself will reverence the mystery of God's dealings with another. The particular lights of truth which are so bright for us may shine dimly for our neighbour, and his eyes may see dazzling splendours to which our own are blind. Neither is the way God has led us his way for men of other thoughts and other tempers, whom he is training for other work in this life and the life to come. It may be natural—impatience and vulgarity

are natural—that we should try to force them into our own way; but God will not hold us guiltless if we lay rude hands on sacred things. The sin is near akin to superstition, for the will-worship which insists on serving God in our own way is very likely to insist on forcing the same way on our neighbour, and the vulgar pride which makes ourselves a law for others will blind us to God's teaching of ourselves. There is a worse thing than mere limitation and narrowness—there is unbelief somewhere if we preach ourselves as the light of men, and forget the true light whose coming into the world lighteth every man.

There is no nobler and diviner work in life than this of being guides to other men, and therefore none that makes a more searching call for gentleness and reverence and deep humility. It is not learning that is needed, though learning has its uses, but the wisdom that comes of purity and truth and love unfeigned. This is the wisdom from above, which alone has power from on high to strike out sparks of life divine from those around us. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts; and the Spirit of God within us is the spirit of gentleness and loving service. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."



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**XVIII.**  
**PERSONAL INFLUENCE.**

“Be thou an example.”—1 TIM. iv. 12.

## XVIII.

### PERSONAL INFLUENCE.<sup>1</sup>

PERSONAL influence is a force that never ceases working. Fathers and mothers, wives and children, friends and acquaintances—we influence them, and they influence us; and that unceasingly, for even the memory of past influence is itself an influence, and may be all the stronger if the memory of death has made it sacred. We may not feel, or we may forget; but something remains on record for the day of judgment.

Yet influence is a subtle force. It does not seem to depend on the things we do, for two men may do the same things or speak the same words, yet give out very different influences. Or if they speak no words at all, their silent presence is an influence. The mere sight of some persons is an influence of rest and peace, while others chill us before they speak a word. The doctor does his best to keep them out of a sickroom. Neither does personal influence depend on the reputation a man bears, which indeed is occasionally quite wide of his real character. Every now and then you say in your heart—it may not be

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel College, Cambridge, November 20, 1898.

right to say it in words—"He is supposed to be so and so; but somehow he gave me a different impression." Well, your impression may be wrong: but do not part with it till you are satisfied that it is wrong, for it is more likely to be true than common fame.

And for this reason. A man may put on manners, but he cannot disguise his personal influence. An effusive welcome somehow rather chills you than otherwise; and gradually you see that the man is cold and heartless. Another man is correct enough; there is nothing you can say against him; yet you feel that his influence is not good. You may not say it—often you ought not to say it—but can you help drawing your conclusion? But here comes a practical question. Suppose you are not good yourself. Suppose, for instance, you have a bad temper. Ought you to put on manners like the hypocrite, or to "be natural," and let it loose? I answer without hesitation, Do what the hypocrite does, but do not stop where he stops. He is quite right in putting on manners: the wrong he does is in not trying to make them real. He puts on manners merely to hide his bad temper; you must put them on that they may help you to overcome it. If you firmly keep down the wicked words and wicked looks, that will help you greatly to overcome the wicked thoughts; but only if you are doing your best to overcome them, not if you are content like the hypocrite with hiding them.

Personal influence comes from the real man, and

his disguises do not help it at all. You see this well in public men, from whom we learn what it is prudent to do. One man is an excellent speaker: but his best speech will somehow prove unconvincing if he does not believe it himself. Another is a poor speaker; but his words will carry weight if they are carefully and earnestly thought out, and spoken with evident sincerity. The world may take a little time to judge between them, but in the end it seldom judges wrong. The one may be admired; the other will be listened to. Any clever fellow may snatch an occasional success; but there is no lasting influence to be won without sincerity and truth.

All this is even truer when we ask what it is our duty to do. Men simply refuse to learn from Pharisees who teach, and do not. Words that come from the heart may be poor words, but they are the words that go to the heart. It is useless to preach if you are not yourself the sermon. Your best words will ring hollow (the world has a good ear for false money) unless you are doing your best to live according to them. But poor words will find their way to the heart if they come from the heart; and then, whether we hear or whether we forbear, yet shall we know that they were God's word to us.

If then you want to have a good influence, you must be good yourself; and if you want to have a better influence, you must be a better man. There is no other way, for it depends not on what we do, but on what we are. Influence is unconscious, so

that if you lay yourself out for it, you will lose your pains. It comes of itself like true happiness if you follow duty; but if you make it your aim, it will for ever escape you. A good influence is God's choicest blessing for this life: and there is no blessing for the man who wilfully turns aside from duty. Yet let no man doubt that the blessing is within his reach. The best of us are not good; only striving to be good. Yet a light that is set on a hill cannot be hid; and even if it seem hid in a cottage, there will not be wanting some of God's children to rejoice in it and bless him for it. Christ is the light of the world; and as thou art his, thou too shalt be its light. It is the very nature of light to shine in the darkness; and he that is faithful, his light shall never be put out, for it was lighted from the true light. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the humblest of Christ's people shall shine for ever in his presence.

Personal influence is the divinest of all gifts, because it is not a living power only, by which we live ourselves, but a life-giving power, by which we raise up life in others. The first Adam became a living soul; the second is a life-giving spirit; and so is every one that is Christ's. The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that giveth life; and so is every one that is born of the Spirit. It is the very nature of life to generate new life; and this is the law of heavenly life as well as earthly. Just as it is the highest function of the natural life to raise up the

natural life of a new generation, so it is the highest privilege of the spiritual life to raise up spiritual life in them that are dead in trespasses and sins. Our Saviour did a mighty work in raising Lazarus from the dead ; but he calls each one of us to do a greater work than this. Christ is the life of the world ; and as thou art Christ's, thou too shalt be its life. Thou too shalt heal the sick and raise the dead as he did : but the sickness thou shalt heal is the palsy of the spirit, the leprosy that leadeth unto death in sin ; and the life which thou shalt give is not the fleeting life of a risen Lazarus, but a life that is incorruptible, for death hath no dominion over it.

Now therefore give glory to God, who has given such power unto men. But take heed to yourselves, for to you is this unearthly power given, and you shall give account of it. Woe to the man who takes this noblest gift of God, and turns it downward to the devil's work. Wickedness indeed is not life, but rather death in life ; yet wickedness breeds wickedness, as pestilence breeds pestilence. None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. We cannot help influencing all around us. Our lightest word may echo to the ends of the earth, and the look of a moment may influence the life of children yet unborn. Creatures of a day, we count things trifles of a day, and forget that every trifle has its eternal meaning, and we shall see it plainly in the great and dreadful day, when the secrets of all hearts are known.



Light and life? Pollution and infection? Which are you? for one or the other you must be. Look warily before you answer, and pray God for grace to keep you right, or bring you right if need be. Whoso is faithful, his reward shall be the awfulest and holiest joy of life—that power divine by which we raise the dead, and bring them back to Christ our Shepherd and our Saviour.

**XIX,**  
**LOVE DIVINE.**

“The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”  
—GAL. ii, 20.

## XIX.

### LOVE DIVINE.<sup>1</sup>

IN the simple words before us lies the power of life that is in Christ; and the fact that such power can lie in simple words is itself a gospel for the world. There is neither deep enchantment nor recondite learning in the voice that wakes the dead; only the speaker is the Lord who loves us. There are secrets in Christ inscrutable to sinners, and deeps of wisdom fathomless to men; but the deepest mystery of all, the mystery of mysteries which angels desire to look into, is the open mystery of love which every child who loves can understand. To that child our Father reveals the secret of life which is hidden from the most learned of scholars who is too proud to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. Learning is a good gift, and one that we may covet earnestly; but it is not the best gift, for only love can bless it to our use. No gifts of learning can make us like God as love does, for love is the one true image, frail and mortal though it seem, of the awful holiness on high that glows with love as ever-burning fire.

Though we ourselves are frail and mortal beings,

<sup>1</sup> Howick, July 24, 1904.

our love is not in Christ the frail and mortal thing it seems, for Christ has given it of his own the power of an endless life. It is eternal just because it is not our very own. It is the deepest and strongest thing we know; and it is not our own. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is the highest example of love, and this it is which calls out our love; for by this, says St. John, was manifested the love of God in us—not toward us, but in us. He means not here the great manifestation of the love of God as love toward men, but its further manifestation in ourselves, when we love our fellow-men. Our love is not our own; it is only God's love working in us.

But the sending of the Son of God is more than the highest example of love. It is the mighty tragedy from which all human love derives its living power. It is not a mere condescension of infinite greatness to infinite littleness, but the costly sacrifice by which our Father redeemed his perishing children. Kindness and goodness are only one side of love; and we debase it into weakness and sin if we forget its other side of stern self-sacrifice and awful holiness. He that spared not his own Son, will he spare us? If he that knew not sin bore the consequences of sin that was not his own, shall not we sinners bear the consequences of our own sin? The Lord of Love ordained them, and perfect love is merciless in doing its work of mercy.

Hear Isaiah's picture of the Lord of hosts come down to save his people—

As when the lion growleth,  
and the young lion over the prey ;  
Though a multitude of shepherds be called out against him,  
for their shouting he will not be afraid,  
and for their noise he will not abase himself.

It is strange that the wild lion pictures the love of God? Even the doctor must do his work with merciless thoroughness. If he does not cut out the whole of the diseased flesh, the cancer will return. So much the more in perfect love is neither variableness nor shadow of turning. The awful unrelenting sternness of the laws of God in Nature is no proof at all that he is not a God of perfect love ; rather it is what we ought to expect from such a God.

If God is love indeed, one thing is certain. He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the uttermost consequences of the sin of the world ; neither will he spare us the uttermost suffering that is needed to cleanse us from sin. Be it what it may, he will not spare us. Every one shall be salted with fire, to make him a welcome offering in Christ. God grant the fire of this world's trials may suffice ; for if that fails, he will not spare us the fire of hell. What that fire may be is more than I know ; yet if God is love, that love must fill the lowest deep of hell. Even the fire of hell cannot be anything else than the fire of love divine that beareth all things, and ever seeks at any cost of suffering to win us from our sin.

God hates sin ; and he that loveth sin, the wrath of God abideth on him. So God hated sin, that he gave his only Son to die for the sin of the world. What is it then that Christ has done for us by his death and resurrection ? He is the propitiation for our sins ; he has made atonement for us ; he has reconciled us unto God ; he is our sacrifice ; he has redeemed us from sin ; he has wrought salvation for us ; he has given us life eternal. Now these are not so many different things ; they are only different ways of looking at one thing : and we are told to look at it in many different ways, because no one way of looking at it can give us all that it means. For instance, Christ is our sacrifice because he really did what the old sacrifices only represented ; but we need other words to remind us that he also did for us things which the old sacrifices could not represent at all.

One thing, however, Christ has not done. He has not reconciled God to us, if we mean that God once hated us, and only loves us now. God hates sin ; but he never hated us, even while we were yet sinners. His wrath is love after all, but love too strong and true to spare us needful suffering. An atonement for sin was not needed that he might be free to love us, but that we might be able to love him. He is not an offended God who cannot pardon the guilty till the innocent has suffered in their place. He is more ready to forgive than we to ask him ; and there is nothing to separate him from us but the wall of sin we build ourselves.

Why then, ask some, why cannot God forgive us without any atonement at all? If he really loves us, why cannot he forgive us at once? Well, there is at least one plain reason why he cannot. Suppose the Lord of Truth took back his word, The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Suppose almighty Love were weak enough to take the Serpent's word instead, Ye shall not surely die. What then? We should be sinners still, repenting only to sin again, unless God should also give us some new life that can strive with sin and overcome it. Without this no forgiveness can make us anything but immortal sinners, as unfit for heaven as we were before.

For this then Christ our Saviour was contented to suffer death on the cross—not that the Father might be made to love us, but that we might have life, and have it in abundance. And those who have that life, and feel it leaping up within them unto life eternal, they tell us with one voice that it flows from the cross of Christ. Search through the ages, search through every land; and wherever you can find one who verily knows the powers of another world, he will tell you with St. Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."





**XX.**  
**SALVATION.**

“Thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins.”—MATT. i. 21.

## XX.

### SALVATION.<sup>1</sup>

WE are all agreed that the Gospel is a message of salvation—that whether Jesus of Nazareth be God or man or both or neither, he is presented to us as the Saviour of the world. This is his claim; and those who ridicule its falsehood and those who say he never made it are nevertheless in full agreement with us that on this claim the faith of Christendom has rested since time out of mind. There may be doubt whether Christianity be true; but there is no doubt at all that it is a gospel of salvation.

So far well: but some good people have strange ideas of what salvation is. A common word like that needs no explanation forsooth, so we never stop to ask what it really means. We take—something or other—for granted, and stumble into meanings for words which would astonish St. Paul; as when we turn the charity that never faileth into giving a sixpence to get rid of a beggar. Even the unbeliever sometimes has grace to tell us that salvation is not worth much, unless it means a great deal more than some of us fancy. And what is that? If we are

<sup>1</sup> Bottisham, December 20, 1903.

saved, we shall not go to hell. We shall get our sins plastered over somehow or other, and then we shall steal into heaven and be happy ever after. What more can we want? What can be more delightful than to cheat God's law, and escape the punishment we deserve?

This is a very old way of thinking. I could shew you pages and pages written within three hundred years after Christ, which seem to see nothing in the Gospel but the one escape from hell fire. But it is assuredly not Christ's way of thinking, nor that of his apostles. It is doubtless true that if we are saved, we shall not go to anything like what people mean by hell: but it does not follow that this is a good account of salvation. On the contrary, it is utterly misleading. We never read that Christ came to save us from hell fire, whatever that may mean. We read indeed that we are saved from wrath through him; but wrath is not hell fire. Surely in this life the wrath is revealed from heaven on all ungodliness; and he that believeth not the Son, here and now the wrath of God abideth on him. That wrath is as truly revealed in the torments of conscience, and even in the false peace of the utterly wicked who have almost forgotten that they ever had a conscience, as it can possibly be in any future fires of hell. It is a faithful saying doubtless, that Christ came to save sinners: but what was it from which he came to save sinners? Surely from sin itself, not simply from some future punishment

of sin. His word is, Go, and sin no more ; his promise, Sin shall have no more dominion over you. The message is of light and life and love, of righteousness and peace and joy, here on earth as well as there in heaven for evermore. It has its warnings for the despisers and the wicked ; but the men who mistake these for the message itself are simply mistaking the shadows for the sunlight.

The mistake arose among the early Christians, who lived under the Roman Empire, and looked up to that as the image upon earth of God's kingdom over the earth. So indeed it was, but a more imperfect image than they knew. The Empire was a great and mighty state, and represented God's kingdom far more worthily than Egypt or Babylon had done ; but it had its weaknesses, and one of these was misleading. The Empire had no good police : but the amount of crime this caused was not the whole of the mischief. In the first place, so many offenders escaped that people got familiar with the idea that if they broke Cæsar's law, they had a good chance of getting off unpunished ; and people are tempted to blame the law itself when one man is punished and perhaps a worse escapes. Then again if the authorities could not catch all the offenders, they were tempted to make tremendous examples of those they did catch, burning and crucifying them wholesale. Now the early Christians, who lived under the Empire, naturally looked up to God as a sort of Roman emperor in heaven. So they were tempted to think his laws like Cæsar's, declaring not

always eternal right and truth, but sometimes only the passion of a moment—his justice like Cæsar's, which sometimes punished offenders, and sometimes could not get hold of them—his punishments like Cæsar's, full of cruelty. They could hardly rise above Cæsar to the idea of a law that never fails, of justice that is never deceived, of punishments that always come in the way of natural consequence. So they saw no difficulty in the story that God will some day condemn the wicked and the heathen to the everlasting fire of hell.

"Some day," you notice. The natural man likes this gospel, not because it is full of horror, but because it is really less terrible than it looks. There is a good deal in that "some day." Many things may happen first; and at all events, we need not trouble ourselves quite yet. Perhaps it is too bad to be true; and anyhow, it is a long way off, and we know that God is merciful. So the devil tells us every day; but he only means his old lie, *Ye shall not surely die*.

But some will say, *Where is the difference?* If we are saved from sin, we shall be saved from hell, and we cannot be saved from hell unless we are saved from sin. If we cannot have one salvation without the other, it does not matter which we make our aim. I answer that this is very good theory, but that it does not work out in practice, because the natural man insists on forgetting that we cannot be saved from hell unless we are saved from sin. Heavenly things are like earthly. If we are good, we shall have true

joy, and we cannot have true joy unless we are good. We cannot have the one without the other: yet it matters a great deal which we make our aim. If we aim at being good, joy will come of itself; but if we aim at joy, we shall not be good, and true joy will utterly escape us. So here with heavenly things. If we want only to be saved from hell, we shall not really feel that we need first to be saved from sin. The natural man positively will not believe it. Some say that Christ has made an arrangement which will somehow save us from our punishment. Others are of the elect, and all roads will bring them to heaven. Others put their trust in holy sacraments and holy ceremonies in general to save them from hell hereafter without saving them now from sin. God says, The soul that sinneth, it shall die; and they will renounce their sin fast enough when they are frightened by any sort of danger, though they mostly come back to it when the danger is over. The clever thing, you know, is to time your repentance properly, so as to get all the pleasures of sin as long as you can enjoy them; then at the last moment you say words or go through ceremonies, and then sure enough the pleasures of heaven lie straight before you. Both saints and sinners mismanage—the one by giving up the pleasures of sin, the other by not getting those of heaven; but you have cheated God's law, and made the best of both worlds.

Granted that we must be saved from sin, men do not see that we must first be saved from sin



before we can be saved from hell : and in this they make at least two great mistakes. For one of them, they look on hell simply as a punishment for sin, as if something else might have done as well. They forget that hell is necessarily connected with sin as its natural consequence. More than this ; it is nothing else than our present state of sin continued after death. Whatever death may be, we have no reason to think it has any power to change our heart. The difference it makes to the sinner is that he has to leave behind him the body which protected him from too much suffering, and the distractions which helped him to turn his back on God. Now at last he is forced to face the truth he despised, and to see the love he hated blazing down in wrath upon him. If that wrath be fire, then I for one believe that hell is fire. But the coals of wrath are sin, and that fire needs must burn as long as it can find in us any sin to feed it. Whether it will ever fully burn away our sin is more than I need now discuss : but if it have an end at all, it can have no other end but this. If hell is a state of sin, the one thing certain is that we cannot possibly be saved from it, either now or hereafter, till we have been saved from sin.

The other great mistake is in fancying that a man can be frightened into goodness by the fear of hell. True, he will do a good deal if he is well scared ; but he will not do the one thing needful. Salvation is not easy to buy, and he will pay a high price for it in good works and other mortifications ; but he will not

part with sin. No man ever loved sin the less for fear of hell, though fear of hell has kept some in misery till a better thing got hold of them. Christ alone can save us from our sin : and even he can only save us by the power of love. The same love that burns in wrath on sin shines as light on them that turn away from sin. It is not sin itself that sinks us to hell, but the love of sin ; and if we love Christ instead, sin shall have no more dominion over us. The question from the great white throne will not be how many sins we did, but what we did with our sin. Did we love it, or did we turn away from it ? Do not trouble yourself to get assurance of your forgiveness. You cannot turn away from sin but in the love of Christ ; so that the turning away is itself forgiveness and salvation here on earth, signed and sealed in heaven, and attested among men by the death and resurrection of the Son of Man, in whom we have eternal life both now and evermore.



**XXI.**  
**JOB'S PROBLEM.**

“Those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem?”—LUKE xiii. 4.

## XXI.

### JOB'S PROBLEM.<sup>1</sup>

THIS is the problem of Job, that God's ways are not equal. Evil does not always hunt the wicked to overthrow him. Sometimes he flourishes like a green bay tree, and becomes mighty in power, while the righteous dieth in the bitterness of his soul. God's ways are not equal, for if he causeth his sun to rise on just and unjust, he also brings calamity on just and unjust, as it would seem, without respect of persons.

It was an old problem in Job's time—this strangely unequal distribution of this world's good and bad things—and it is a problem still. Job's friends and Job himself could only grope in darkness, and even the cross of Christ has not made it clear. We have indeed a full assurance from the other world that God is not unjust, but full of love: but we have no vindication of his ways to men. He does not vindicate himself when he answers Job, and he does not vindicate himself in Christ. It may be that the answer is beyond our reason, and we must learn it by living it, so far as we can ever learn it in this world.

<sup>1</sup> Girton College, February 25, 1900.

Meanwhile Job's friends found a short answer. If Job had suffered above other men, he must have sinned above other men. If he had seemed a good man, he must have been so much the greater hypocrite. Even Elihu does not get far beyond this; and the Lord himself only convicts Job of ignorance, and clears him from the charges of hypocrisy and gross sin. Yet the answer of Job's friends is the instinct of sinful human nature, when calamity overtakes our friends, to say, Their sin hath found them out. On two occasions our Lord rebuked it. When they told him of the Galileans whom Pilate had killed at their sacrifices, he answered that sin (I mean *their* sin) was not the reason why they or the eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell had suffered these things. Again he says, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, of the man that was born blind. So clearly does he speak, that men have ever since been more or less ashamed to explain the misfortunes of their neighbours that way. Whatever evil thoughts they may cherish, they are commonly shy of telling them to others.

Yet I fear the right thing is often done for the wrong reason, as if the sin were a breach of charity rather than a breach of truth: and it is never safe to have bad reasons. In this case there may be no visible harm when our neighbour's misfortune is what lawyers might call the act of God: the mischief arises when it plainly is the result of his own sin, and we are forbidden in the name of charity to say

so. I grant it is not always and everywhere proper to say it: but if charity requires us to shut our eyes on truth we see, the sooner we renounce that sort of charity the better.

Now I am as far as possible from thinking that we can fully make out the problem which our Saviour left unsolved: but I think we can do the sort of thing which men of science do. They have never fully made out a single fact of nature—not even why we feel warm before the fire. Sooner or later, they are always checked by a veil of mystery. Sometimes they can push back the veil a little, by shewing that one thing depends on another; but they never can tear it down. If they can explain one cause by another for a long way, sooner or later they always come to a cause they cannot explain. Why does a stone fall? Because the earth pulls it down? Why does the earth pull it down? They cannot explain that; and when they do explain it, they will only explain it by some further cause they cannot explain. Science never really does explain things: but it gives us a practical view of lesser mysteries by shewing that they are parts of greater mysteries, as when we learn that our weather depends on the balancings of the clouds for thousands of miles around us.

So here, though we cannot explain Job's problem, we can get a very practical view of it when we see that it is part of a greater problem. That greater problem is Predestination. And shall we look for



light to what Gibbon might call the darkest corner of the whole theological abyss? Yes: just because Predestination is a great mystery, it throws a flood of light on the lesser mysteries around it. Job's problem is a case of predestination, for misfortunes are the refusing or the taking away of this world's good things: and this is predestination, so far as it is not the result of our sin. And predestination is no reward of merit. If it was not for the man's sin that he was born blind, neither was it for your righteousness that you were born with eyes to see. Esau was a sinner if you please; but he was not rejected for his sin, because he was rejected before he was born. So too, if Pharaoh had a rival for the throne of Egypt, that rival was no more rejected for his sin than Pharaoh was exalted for his righteousness. Predestination as we find it in the Bible refers to this world's good and evil things, not to salvation and perdition; and misfortune is the loss of this world's good things, or the gaining of this world's evil things. The loss of spiritual good things is not called a misfortune; and at any rate it is no part of Job's problem.

Now the gifts we are born with are entirely matter of predestination, for we have no voice in the matter. They are in God's hands, at his sovereign disposal, and he does not account for them to us. The opportunities also which we meet in life are largely matter of predestination, for they are largely beyond our control. Nor is there any injustice in this. God never promised to let all men share his gifts

alike, or according to their merits; and he will not judge us by his gifts, but by the use we make of them. Our gifts and opportunities are so to say the zero line from which we start; and the question for us in the last day is how far we have got beyond it. To whom much is given, of him shall much be required. The zero for one man is ten talents, for another five, for another one; and even the man with one talent will be commended if he gains with it one more talent. God is not Pharaoh, to require bricks without giving straw.

If you ask me Job's question, why the wicked prospers in all his ways, while the righteous is crushed by misfortunes, I can only answer that such is God's will. Sometimes the wicked deserves all he gets. He may be one of the children of this world who for their own generation only are wiser than the children of light: and then God gives him his reward in his own generation only. He never promised that world's peace to the wicked, or this world's happiness to the righteous. If a man labour for the meat which perisheth, he shall not labour in vain; and if he labour for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

But suppose all merit out of the question. Then we can only say that God gives and refuses this world's good things according to his sovereign will; and this is what we call predestination. God forbid indeed that I should think the great masses of hopeless and demoralizing poverty which disgrace our

modern civilization anything else than an abomination to him. It is not his will that men and women should be born into a state which is worse than that of beasts, but it is his will that the sin of our fathers as well as our own sin should work out its evil results to the third and fourth generation, though it is equally his will that we should labour with all our might to check them. It is as truly service to God as anything we do in church, when we labour to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free. We are preaching a gospel to the poor in preaching the lesser gospels of mercy which draw their power from the glorious gospel of salvation. It matters little what the work of mercy is, and even less who does it, for every good work is of God.

In saying that God gives and refuses this world's good things according to his sovereign will, I do not mean that his counsel is always secret unto us. If we cannot see it as we look forward, we can often see it as we look backward, say on the apostle of the Gentiles and the gifts which fitted him for his work. Only we have no right to complain if we cannot see God's purpose at all. Again, I do not mean that his sovereign will works otherwise than according to law. The old proverb that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge, is true enough of natural consequences, however false it was when it meant that the children are not able to turn away from the sin of their fathers. Yet again, and this is the most important

point of all, I do not mean that sovereign will is mere caprice, or utter mystery. The purpose for which it works is known to us, the methods by which it works are partly known, and the motive for its working is revealed to us. Be the mystery of predestination what it may, above and beyond it is the mystery of love assured to us in the Incarnation. Be the mystery of predestination what it may, it is but a thing of this world's order, whereas the Incarnation comes down to us from a higher order, and must govern our understanding of this world's problems. We must look at them in the light of that supreme and final revelation of our Father's love, and rest in patience and thankfulness that there is love beyond them all. Lower the clouds as darkly as they may, the sun is shining on their silver tops.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him :  
If we deny him, he also will deny us :  
If we are faithless, he abideth faithful :  
Himself he cannot deny.



**XXII.**

**THE PROPHECY OF CAIAPHAS.**

“And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”—JOHN xi. 49, 50.

## XXII.

### THE PROPHECY OF CAIAPHAS.<sup>1</sup>

OUR Lord's ministry lasted as long as it did and no longer, because Pharisees and Sadducees could not agree to kill him till after the raising of Lazarus. The Pharisees indeed took counsel against him as early as the healing of the man with a withered hand, and from that time forward were constantly seeking to put him to death. But when we read that they took counsel with the Herodians, who were very much the same as the chief priests and Sadducees, and that nothing came of it, the natural conclusion is that the Herodians would not help them, for when they did help them later, their help was effective enough. They did not refuse for any love of Christ, as they shewed by their mockings under the cross, but simply because they saw no reason why they should help. The prophet of Nazareth was no doubt a very contemptible fellow; but if the Pharisees found him a thorn in their side, this was reason enough why the Sadducees should not help them to get rid of him.

So things went on till the Sadducees themselves

<sup>1</sup> Girton College, October 28, 1900.



were alarmed by the raising of Lazarus and the stir it made. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, saying, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. But there seems to have been much disputing. Nicodemus and Joseph may not have been there; but others were not likely to abandon at once the old Sadducee view, that they must not give up a man who was a plague to the Pharisees. Presently one of them, named Caiaphas, being high priest that year, that memorable year, bursts in with the characteristic rudeness of the Sadducees. He is a strong man who knows his own mind, and is impatient of all this talking. "Ye know nothing at all, nor even consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Caiaphas has gone over to the Pharisees, and that is decisive. From that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Caiaphas looks down on the council with the contempt of a thoroughly bad man for people who cannot make up their minds at once. If the Pharisees had scrupled at shedding innocent blood, he would have despised them the more. The matter was as plain as it could be. If Jesus was a political danger, the sooner he was put out of the way the better. The question was not of right or justice, but simply of "our expediency"; and if anyone cannot see that,

he is a fool. It does not matter who or what Jesus of Nazareth may be, or what he may have done or left undone, for he must plainly be put to death as soon as may be, if our expediency requires it: so there is an end of the matter.

Clear and cogent reasoning this, no doubt; the very language of the statesmen in all ages who make a mock of truth and right. Yet with all his common sense and clear logic, Caiaphas has made one woeful blunder, which St. John follows down with unrelenting sternness. Let us see. The real objection to our Lord was not simply that he broke the Sabbath, or even that he claimed to be the Son of God. Down below these charges was the feeling, none the less real that the Jews were not fully conscious of it, that his teaching and personal claims were destroying the privileges of Israel. It was all very well for him to say that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: but there was nothing specially Jewish in his teaching; and if he really was the Son of God, he must be Lord of Gentiles as well as Jews, and he shewed no disposition to pour out on them the vengeance for which Israel was longing. It seemed rather that he would give the Romans their chance for vengeance on Israel. Therefore it was expedient for God's people that he should be put out of the way.

God's people forsooth. That was not the word they used. They said, "the Romans shall come and take away our place and nation." By using that

other word *nation* they let out the fatal secret that they were no longer God's people, but a mere nation like the nations of the world, whom they likened unto dogs. They spoke more truth than they knew. It was their own place, for it was no longer God's, and they themselves were a people of Israel no more, but a mere Jewish nation which was renouncing the privileges of which they were so proud. Then comes Caiaphas, keen as a lynx for questions of expediency, but with no eye for this huge moral blunder. He just repeats it, "that the whole nation perish not." Then St. John lays open the lofty irony of God in history. Caiaphas was indeed a prophet. This spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, that memorable year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation—Israel was one of the nations now, and nothing more—and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

This was the comment of the old evangelist, as he looked back through sixty years to the days when he had been with Jesus: and from the teaching of those sixty years he learned the fulness of the meaning which Caiaphas had not intended. He had seen the shame of the cross, the glory of the resurrection. He had seen Christ's churches guided by a wisdom that was not of men to spread among the Gentile nations, till now they were chiefly made up of the scattered children of God whom the Jews despised. Above all, he had seen the awful irony of the

destruction of Jersualèm by the Romans, the burning of the temple, and the scattering of Israel that it should not even be a nation any more. In their hatred of Gentiles they condemned and killed the Just, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation: yet this very hatred it was which actually brought the Romans to take away their place and nation. Meanwhile Christ died for Israel, and not for Israel only, but that he might gather into one the children of God which were scattered abroad. In Christ there was neither Greek not Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but for all alike the power of everlasting life. There failed not one thing of all that Caiaphas had said, however little he may have meant it.

But is St. John quite right? Is there not one thing still unfulfilled? Christ died that he might gather into one the scattered children of God: and where is that unity now? The church of the first days was all of one mind, and for several centuries there was but one communion of Christians, and indeed there could not be more than one, if we do not count those outside it as Christians at all. But where is unity now? The Greeks curse the Latins, the Latins curse us, and we ourselves have sects by the score, all claiming to be Christ's true followers. Yet Christ spoke of unity—"that they may be perfected into unity"—and plainly meant unity to be a mark of his church. On this pretence it is that so many in our time desire unity at any cost of truth.

If only we were one communion, the authority of a united church would seem to cover things which without it would be falsehood and disobedience to Christ.

I deliberately call this a pretence, for a temper which is careless of truth is none of Christ's. We believe Christ because he is the truth; and if we sacrifice truth to anything whatever, we are none of his. There is no profaner page in history than that of the negotiations for the union of churches, down to the very latest. If Rome is right in calling herself infallible, the sooner we make our submission to her the better. We cannot make conditions with a claim like that. But if she speaks falsely, no man fit to be called a Christian can think of union with her till she has repented of the great lie which has caused more disunion in Christendom than any other. We cannot make conditions with a lie like that.

But have we really no higher idea of unity than this? Is the unity Christ spoke of an outward and material unity of rites and worship, of laws and ordinances, such as might have satisfied Caiaphas? If this were all, we should be none the better for it, and might be much the worse, for this kind of unity could not but be utterly unspiritual. There is no gain in Christian unity if it is gained by disregard of truth, and is therefore unity in him who was a liar from the beginning. No, Christ spoke not of a satanic unity like this, but of a unity in himself which far transcends all outward differences of race and creed and rival churches. Differences there must be

of thought and expression, just as there are differences of calling; but the love of Christ covers them as the waters cover the sea. Nay, there can be no unity without them, for without differences there can be no spirit working unity through differences and by means of them. It is not difference of belief which separates men, but bad temper which makes it an excuse for a quarrel. And if the outward and visible sign of communion fail us, it does not follow that the inward and spiritual grace of unity is wanting. Unity is not a far-off dream of the future, but a present fact, and the mightiest fact of present life. Be differences what they may, all those who are one spirit with the Lord are already gathered into one in him.

St. John was right. Unity is present like salvation: yet like salvation it can grow. From faith to higher faith is the rule of Christian life, revealed in the successive trials which are to make us perfect like our Lord by suffering. Where the Spirit is, there is unity; and the Spirit is with us as we grow in grace and knowledge. Salvation grows, from the first motions of good we feel in childhood to the ripened graces of the man of God who wears a nobler crown of glory than the grey hairs of this world's life: and beyond these again is the everlasting growth of likeness to Christ in the world where there is no more strife and hatred. So too unity grows, from the first faint sympathies of human kindness to the ripest charity that flesh of sin can reach on earth: and

beyond that again lies the everlasting growth of unity in that eternal which we call the future. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, we shall see that the apostle's hope and aspiration through years of toil and suffering, to be found *in Christ*—one with Christ and one with all that are in Christ—is not a mystic's dream of some far-distant future, but an eternal fact of the eternal world which flows unseen around this world of gloom and sin like the all-embracing and all-quickening air of heaven in which we live and move and have our being.

**XXIII.**  
**THE RESURRECTION OF THE**  
**BODY.**



“ “He is not a God of the dead, but of the living.”—LUKE XX. 38.

## XXIII.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.<sup>1</sup>

NOT Easter Day only, but every Sunday in the year is the memorial of Christ our Saviour's resurrection from the dead. Christ is risen; he is risen indeed. He that liveth and was dead is alive for evermore, and has the keys of death and the grave. An ever-new and living way is open to our Father's presence through the blood of Christ. There are no stairs of gold to climb, no gates of adamant rock to pass, no guards of cherubim or flaming sword to stop us. The palace of the Great King lies open, and the throne of mercy stands unguarded. There is nothing but our sin to make us afraid; and our Easter Sunday's message is that the risen Son of Man has conquered sin for all that will forsake it.

No such glorious news was ever told on earth as on that first Easter Day which turned the unspeakable shame and horror of the crucifixion into everlasting victory. As the great peaks of the Himalayas stand out in peerless grandeur by themselves, looking down ten thousand feet of snowy wastes on mountains higher than any in Europe, so Christ our Saviour's

<sup>1</sup> Brantham, April 7, 1901 (Easter Day).

resurrection stands out by itself, looking down in peerless grandeur on the noblest scenes of history. Never before and never since has death been overcome by man, and peradventure never shall be more till the trumpet sounds for the coming of the Son of Man, who conquered sin and death on Golgotha for evermore.

Yet even as those highest peaks are made of the same rocks which form the mountains far below them, so the Saviour's resurrection is not so utterly unlike the rest of history as it seems. No strange light shone from the empty tomb, but the old light whose ever-present coming lighteth every man. No unheard-of power raised him from the dead, but the old power of love divine which is the life of every sinner, however unworthy of it he may be. Love is stronger than death; but no man touched by sin can wield the fulness of its quickening power. It is a true instinct which tells us that our loved ones only pass away from us because the love which struggles to recall them is too weak with sin to do it. Could we but look on them like the Lord himself, with eyes that sin had never dimmed, and love that sin had never stained with subtle selfishness, then surely as our God is love, that love of ours, which is his love working in us, would have power to raise the dead. They sin who find a limit in heaven or earth or hell to the power of the love of God which worketh in us, ever striving to lift us up to heights of holiness above the angels. That which can overcome the grim

reality of death in sin can surely conquer its shadow of bodily death.

I think our text will help to shew us that our Saviour's resurrection is only the perfect working of a law that works in all of us, and but for sin would have its perfect work in all of us. The question laid before him by the Sadducees is not simply of a future life, but of the resurrection of the body. I need not analyse his answer closely; nor will I dwell on the mighty argument of his words, For all live unto him—that the living God cannot be supposed to rule a world of death. God said to Abraham, I will be thy God; and after many days he still says to Moses, I am the God of Abraham. What does this mean but that a covenant of God is of necessity an everlasting covenant? And he that shares an everlasting covenant must also share an everlasting life. Because I live, ye shall live also. To whom the Eternal speaks, he cannot die for ever. The image of God in man must share God's everlasting life. Nothing that is good can perish; for whatsoever God doeth, he doeth it for ever. I cannot think that even these lower gifts of prudence and wisdom will perish in the grave. Though they go to the land where all things are forgotten, they will not for ever be forgotten. Unless heaven is poorer than earth, all faithful work that is done in this world of death must have its use and meaning for that particular state of life eternal to which our God shall please to call us.

But if these lower gifts are indestructible by death,

far more so the loftiest gift of all, the love which makes us likest God, the love of Christ which is shed abroad, even in the hearts of men who never heard his name. If God is love, how can his love within us perish? The thoughts that "wander through eternity," the conscience which thunders from another world, the love that is lavished for others — can a being capable of these things sink into nothingness, and vanish like foam on the water? Let them believe it who can: I am not so credulous.

But if this had been all that our Saviour meant, the Sadducees would have been acute enough to answer, Well, Master, this may prove a future life: but how does it bear on our question of the resurrection of the body? I think our Lord has not forgotten that. God's everlasting covenant was with Abraham—not Abraham's soul, but Abraham body and soul, for the body was expressly brought into the covenant by the seal of circumcision. If therefore the body fell away at Abraham's death, it must sooner or later be raised again to bear its part in the covenant of life eternal. So must it be with Abraham; and so must it be with us and all men, for there is no man that is not in some sort of covenant with God for life eternal. Our own covenant is sealed in Baptism, and ratified in every work we do by faith; and most of all that body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ on which we feed by faith shall preserve our body and soul to everlasting life. These are the pledges of his love, the assurances

of life transcending space and time, a life that cannot fail to quicken first our mortal body, and then to repair the waste of sin and make this devastated world rejoice with the beauty of our God which fadeth not away, and with the glory of the Lord which is for evermore.

Is this vision of St. Paul too dreamy, too enthusiastic—in a word, too glorious to be true? The natural man may well despair as he looks round on a world more than half heathen after nearly nineteen hundred years of Christian preaching, and often very doubtfully Christian even where it calls itself Christian. But what would he have? Was Christ to bear down the wills of men and make himself a king by force? If not, two thousand years are as nothing for the colossal task of winning through sinful men the hearty and willing submission of a world of sinners to a Gospel which crucifies the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. You doubters do but play over the surface of human nature, and know little more than children of the tremendous forces working in its depths. Try them for yourselves. Take seriously the struggle—I will not say with sin, but only with some habits you know to be wrong. Strive and fight in all your carnal strength. Remind yourself of duty, call prudence and worldly wisdom to your help, and bring in pride and shame and the keenest darts of ridicule—in vain. Then when you have learned in your helplessness the might and mystery of sin, you may think of measuring

the mightier power of the love of Christ which overcomes it. You can no more judge that power by the men who resist it than you can judge of learning by a man who cannot read. See what it has done for those who have given themselves to it heart and soul—how it has awed and hallowed the most gifted natures, and turned the weakness of common people into strength, and lifted them to heights of loving tenderness and patient courage far above the tales of classic virtue. What must that power be, which already shines so gloriously through the vail of sin? Far off the day may be, when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our God, but faith can see its coming from afar, and knows as surely as to-morrow's sunrise that in God's own good time we shall all of us come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And in that day there shall be no more death, but honour and glory and immortality, with the gift of life eternal crowning all, and joining us for ever to the Lord who loves us.

XXIV.  
BY MANIFESTATION OF THE  
TRUTH.



**“By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”—2 COR. iv. 2.**

## XXIV.

### BY MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH.<sup>1</sup>

ST. PAUL'S Second Epistle to the Corinthians tells us more than any other of his own life and trials. We get hints elsewhere; but here he writes with a weight lifted off his mind, and speaks more freely to these repentant sinners than even to his beloved Philippians, who had never gone seriously wrong at all. The verse before us is his description of the Christian ministry, or rather of Christian teaching in the widest sense. So let us take it to pieces clause by clause, and see exactly what he means.

*By manifestation of the truth.* The way we come to know spiritual things is sometimes called revelation, sometimes manifestation. If we speak of revelation, we mean that some veil of ignorance and sin is taken away, so that we can see their glory. The glory is there; and now the thing that hindered us from seeing it is removed. It is as if the shutters were taken down to let the light shine in: and it is always a work of God, for we never read of man revealing anything spiritual. But manifestation is the common

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel College, Cambridge, March 4, 1903.

word in St. Paul, and St. John uses no other in his Gospel. Manifestation means not that the veil is taken away, but that the light shines through it more and more. If the sun rises in a mist, we see its light and feel its warmth long before it melts away the mist. So when Christ says, I will manifest myself to him, he means not that he will do away our ignorance and weakness at a stroke, but that if we love him, ignorance and weakness shall not prevent his light from shining on us more and more unto the perfect day.

When therefore St. Paul speaks of manifestation, he means that none of us can presume to reveal truth. It is no property of ours as the natural man thinks, for it belongs to the eternal world and not to this, so that we can only bear witness to it. Our Saviour came to do no more, and we may do no less. Only if we bear a faithful witness, the truth will shine out of itself, and by its manifestation *commend us*, as he says, *to every man's conscience*. There is the teacher's reward on earth—not the applause of the world, but the answer of every man's conscience, whether he hear or whether he forbear, Yea, that is truth. It is a reward which may not reach him here; but it is recorded for the last day. Spiritual truth is not like a statute law which might have been otherwise, and which we must either learn by heart or refer to when we want it. Spiritual truth is God's own thought, and therefore has no variableness nor shadow of turning. And because it is God's nature, it is also man's nature, for man is the image of God. Truths of

history or science are often hard to find ; but spiritual truth is easy, for it is already written in our hearts, if only we are willing to read them. There may be doubt whether this or that is evil-speaking ; but there is no doubt at all that evil-speaking is wrong. If I tell you with St. Paul to put away lying, you all know well enough that this is God's word ; and if I assure you with the Jesuits that you may tell lies almost as often as you please, you all know that this is the devil's word. Even the Jesuit will not deny that it is wrong to tell lies : only he devotes himself to proving that this or that is not telling a lie, and often proves it by arguments which will hardly convince anyone who wishes not to tell lies.

It is *in the sight of God* that by manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man's conscience. He sees the listeners as well as the teachers. If conscience is a judge of truth from whose decision there is no appeal in this world, it does not follow that we are free to believe just what we choose to believe. Conscience is not caprice or fancy, and truth is not whatever we choose to believe, but God's thought revealed from heaven to us, and echoed in our hearts, if we are willing to obey. Take an instance from common life—the dinners at Corinth, where meats which had been offered to idols were set on the table. Shall I do right in eating of them ? Well, there is no doubt at all that idolatry is wrong : so if I think it idolatry, it is sin for me, whatever it is for somebody else who thinks otherwise. If I am sure

that is not idolatry, I am clear, if that be the only doubt about it. But I am bound to make sure one way or the other if I can: and if I cannot be sure that it is right, conscience will tell me that it is sin for me.

Conscience and religion are closely connected: but they are not connected on equal terms, for conscience is above religion, and must judge it for us. To conscience our Lord himself appealed in every word he spoke. Judge not according to appearance, but judge the righteous judgment. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? And St. Paul, "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." If ever a man tells you to believe him or his church without by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, you will know for certain that his teaching is none of Christ's. To speak generally, conscience tells us what we ought to do, while religion gives us strength to do it. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Is not this the voice of conscience? Yet it still sums up all Christian duty, for our Lord has added nothing to these words of Micah. "Thou knowest the commandments," he says to the rich young man. "That ye love one another" is an old commandment, which we had from the beginning: "as I loved you" is not a new commandment, but strength to keep the old which makes the whole a new commandment. We

are weak with sin, and cannot do what conscience tells us we ought to do: therefore while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, that where sin abounded grace might much more abound, and be our strength to do our heavenly Father's will.

Get clear this difference between conscience and religion. Conscience is the voice of God within us, the word of truth and holiness which tells us what we ought to do, and adds no more. Religion is the voice of God without us, the word of grace and power which takes up the work from which the conscience of sinners recoils, and carries it through in Christ to everlasting life. But the two are closely linked together. Religion without conscience would not know what to do; conscience without religion could not do it. Yet there are some who try to separate what God has joined together. The natural man does not know the power of sin, and often openly denies or practically forgets that we need any deliverance from sin. Either it is a natural mistake, or it is balanced by the good we do, or at any rate God is merciful, and will not mind it much. But if we do not need to be delivered from sin, we must either give up religion as useless or couple it with conscience as a second means of learning what we ought to do. But then if conscience and religion both do the same thing, do we really need them both? And if one of them is not wanted, which is it?

Some of our unbelievers take their stand on con-

science only. They say truly enough that conscience tells them what they ought to do; and then they see no need of religion. Well, religion—at least the only religion we need now consider—tells us that Christ died for us, to deliver us from sin: and if this be true, conscience tells us that we owe some duties to him. The only answer is that he died for nothing of the sort: and this generally means—I do not say it always means—that sin is only a natural mistake, and that a natural mistake is not enough to call for such a revelation as this from heaven. In this last they may be right: but surely they have conscience itself against them when they try to explain away sin as nothing worse than a stupid mistake. They knew the difference well enough when they were children: how have they managed to forget it now?

Extremes meet; so some of our Pharisees at the other end of the scale take their stand on religion only, as if there were no need of conscience. The church says so and so; and there is an end of the matter. But they are really preaching not Christ nor even the church, but simply themselves, for they will not let us question what they teach us. They count it presumption to ask whether the church really says what they tell us, unbelief to insist on knowing precisely what church they mean or by what right it commands us, unpardonable sin to try their teaching by the Saviour's words. This is no caricature of a very common sort of teaching, though I grant it does not always go these outrageous lengths. Very many

of us make ourselves masters upon earth, and forget that one is our master, even the Christ.

Teaching enforced in this kind of temper is not likely to be true: but were it ever so true, it is put altogether the wrong way. A command is emptied of spiritual power if we are content to deliver it as a mere command, and not as a manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience. We cannot ignore conscience without destroying religion too, for we leave nothing for religion to work on. And what becomes of sin, when the natural questions of conscience which God welcomes in every word he speaks are treated as disobedience? The church of Rome, for instance, hardly pretends to treat them otherwise. The penalty of counting innocent things as sinful is that really sinful things are hardly taken seriously. We may use very 'serious language or fix a serious penance; but we simply cannot see how sinful they are while we mix them up with things which are essentially disobedience to an authority which does not really speak to conscience.

Yet false doctrine is never wholly false; and even in this there is a grain of truth which we must confess. Truth is real, and he that refuses it refuses at his peril. If he refuses natural truth, he endangers his natural life; if he refuses spiritual truth, he risks his spiritual life. So far our Pharisees are right. But we must not pretend to be masters upon earth: we are but humble witnesses of things that we have seen and heard and spiritually known. We bear our



witness ; and the answer of your conscience that we are telling you the secrets of your own heart is the manifestation of the truth by which you live. If only you are truly faithful to it, the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in you shall guide you into all the truth, and raise you up for the last day to life everlasting.

**XXV.**  
**CHRIST AS GOD.**

“But whom say ye that I am?”—**MATT. xvi. 15.**

## XXV.

### CHRIST AS GOD.<sup>1</sup>

OUR Lord has just asked Peter, Who do men say that the Son of Man is? and heard the various accounts they give of him. "But who do ye say that I am?" Peter's answer is unhesitating: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. That, however, we need not follow any further. Christ speaks as usual to us all. He asks every church and sect all down the ages, But who do ye say that I am? and the answers he gets are as various as those which Peter told him. Some say he is God, some say he is man, and some say he is both. We confess ourselves that he is both God and man: God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world. Putting this in plain words, it simply means that he is as divine as the Father, as human as ourselves. This is as much as anyone need believe, for the complications of the Athanasian Creed add positively nothing to it but a warning not to explain it away. This, however, is the message of the Gospel; and we cannot alter it without entirely

<sup>1</sup> Girton College, October 29, 1907.

changing it. If he is not perfect God and perfect man, we have borne false witness of him; and you had much better look out for a new gospel than try to patch up the old one.

It is a hard saying, I grant. Even if men do not feel their sin, there are plenty of philosophical difficulties in the idea that a man who lived on earth was very God: and if they do, there is a still greater moral difficulty besides. If the heavens are not clean in his sight, how can he be clean that is born of a woman? The difficulty affects both sides of the question. The more we feel our unworthiness, the harder we find it to believe that one who is God has indeed stooped to the likeness of flesh of sin: and the greater the guilt of sin, the more incredible it seems that one who is flesh of our flesh is indeed the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. No wonder it has been in all ages a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. The Jews took up stones to stone him, "because thou being a man makest thyself God"; the Gnostics of the next century murmured, as they might have said, "because thou being God makest thyself a man"; and men have stumbled ever since on one side or the other, confessing sometimes his deity, sometimes his manhood, but seldom realizing both at once. The so-called ages of faith confessed indeed both; but their worship of saints is enough to shew that his manhood was unreal to them. So in our own day many a man who calls him the Son

of God practically thinks of him as a man; and many another who calls him a Son of Man will rather explain away his manhood than face the saying that he was in all things tempted like as we are, but without sin.

Now which is the easier of the two mistakes—to worship him as God, and forget that he is man? or to admire him as a man, and forget that he is God? It is an impressive fact of early Church History, that as soon as men could collect their thoughts about him, they were much more inclined to deny the manhood which had lived among them than the deity they had spiritually known. The false teaching of the second century doubted rather that he was really man than that he was really God: and as I look down the ages, I am inclined to think this has always been the deeper and more obstinate mistake of the two among serious men. Anyone can see the difficulty of a man being God: but one who knows his own heart is likely to feel more acutely the difficulty of God becoming man. The one is chiefly a question about infinity: the other touches a difficulty we can hardly even see without a deeper sense of sin than some of us possess.

Yet is the difficulty real after all? Is it certain that what is man cannot be God, and what is God cannot be man? If so, there is an end of the Gospel certainly, and I think of all other religion too. We could not imagine a god of any sort, unless we were more or less like the idea we have

of him. If there be gods, they must be like us, or we could not know anything about them: and if there be one God, our nature compels us to think of him as at least the best of all that is best in men. And here the sense of sin which makes the difficulty comes in to solve it. The greater the misery, the more it appeals to men for help; and the better the man, the more he feels the appeal. The man who is utterly merciless is utterly hateful: can we throne that hateful thing in heaven? A father pitieth his children, and even a Samaritan can do mercy: is God alone without pity for men so cancered with sin? Is not the very misery of sin a witness that sin is tyrannizing over something in us higher than itself? And if God is the highest we can think of, it follows that the love, the compassion, the self-sacrifice, which are the highest things we know in men, must be the image of God. Ponder the matter, and you will see that a God who dwells in selfish blessedness is quite unthinkable. A life which is not worthy of man cannot be worthy of God. If ye being evil know how to give your children good gifts, to bear with them, to cherish them, to lay down life itself if need be for them, surely God being good will not do less than sinners do. The everlasting arms must be arms of mercy, and the face behind Nature's merciless laws must be a loving one.

Yet we say this with fear and trembling. No heathen ever said it plainly in the olden time; and

the unbeliever who says it now has learned it from the Gospel. Dare we count on the love we do not deserve? What if our unthankfulness has for ever turned God's face away from us? Nature has no forgiveness: how can we expect any? We may still hope, but without some sign from another world to give us courage, we dare not more than faintly hope that somehow sin may not be found beyond the reach of mercy. Then like a burst of sunlight comes the overwhelming revelation—*So God loved the world.* As an old writer says, "He hated us not, nor cast us off, nor bare us malice, but had patience with us and long-suffering. He took up our sins himself, and sold his own Son to be a ransom for us, the holy one for sinners, the immortal one for mortal men." Stupendous indeed and far beyond all that we sinners could dare to think is the compassion and self-sacrifice which for us men and for our salvation stooped from the throne of heaven to a cross of shame. We cried for deliverance, and Christ has given us victory; for mercy, and he has crowned us with glory and honour; for life, and he has given us his very self, that we may feed on him and live for ever. No poet's dream is this, no delirium of heated fancy, but a sober fact of life, which thousands of the best and brightest of us have in living verified from age to age, and in living witnessed of its absolute and final certainty.

Why should it be thought incredible that he is the Son of God whose Person is a fact of a higher



order than the rise and fall of kingdoms? Was he no more than man, who spake as never man spake, and did works which none other man did? Why should it be thought incredible that the Son of God came down from heaven to deliver man, when the story is in perfect harmony with the deepest fact of human nature? And that is not sin. Evil is indeed a grim reality, coming down it may be from a time, if time it be, before the dawn of life on earth; and sin has sunk far deeper in us than we know. But man is an unfathomed deep; and sin is not the bottom of his nature. Far down below the deep of sin is spread the real deep, the deep from which we cry to God. Our cry may be faint and stifled; but he will hear whose ears are open. Our cry is unto God, our soul is thirsting for the living God; yet it is not to the red right hand of power that we cry. Mere omnipotence could only raise us from our death in sin by shattering the moral freedom which makes us better than the beasts. For human love we cry to God, for only human love can touch our heart. The frail and sin-stained thing we see on earth is enough to shew us the power that conquers death and sin, but not to realize the fulness of its might.

“Thou must save, and thou alone” :

yet only man can save, for only sinless man can reveal to men that God's heart is full of human love, too strong to waver like these changing moods of

ours, yet too tender and unselfish to shrink from any sacrifice that may deliver man, and yet withal no other love than that which he has shed abroad in our hearts, however sin has dimmed its glory. Our cry is answered, our aspirations are fulfilled, in him who is both Son of God and Son of Man, in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.



**XXVI.**  
**FREE FORGIVENESS.**

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors . . . and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”—  
LUKE vii. 41.

## XXVI.

### FREE FORGIVENESS.<sup>1</sup>

WE all know something of the difference between our Lord's plain teaching and the complicated systems of men; but the student who knows it best knows also that men are not always to blame for it. There are parts of theology which cannot be made simple, and parts of our Lord's teaching which are not plain. I think you will find that while the revelation of Christ is plain, and our duty plainer still, the difficulties—and there are often plenty of them—are in the philosophy behind it. For instance, Providence is easy enough to one who comes to it as we all may, in the spirit of a little child, and believes in a heavenly Father who sees all that we do and guides all that comes to pass for our good. The difficulties begin when we ask, How shall this be? for there are mysteries in everything we know and everything we do, so that a gospel without mystery would be a plain lie. Yet we are perfectly free to ask the question—Mary is not rebuked for asking it—but if a plain answer cannot always be given to a plain question, we must not grumble if we do not always get one.

<sup>1</sup> Trinity Church, Leicester, February 2, 1902.

On the Forgiveness of Sins the difference is very striking. It is an easy doctrine, and also a hard one. Many of the wise men cannot see how easy it is, and many of the simple folk have no idea of its hardness. We ask the theologians, and we get learned discussions about prevenient grace and grace of congruity: we ask the Lord himself, and he gives us parables like the Two Debtors, the Unmerciful Servant, and the Prodigal Son, which even a child can understand. He tells us a simple tale of mercy shewn by men; and if God's mercy is like that, we know what it means. The difficulty is not in understanding him, but in believing him, for our bad conscience tells us at once that the news of forgiveness is much too good to be true. If we do not hate God, we try to forget him, and more than half wish he would forget us, and leave us alone. If he does remember us, we know that we have not given him cause to remember us for good. Yet the Gospel is the news that he loves us in spite of the sin he hates, and is ready to welcome us as the prodigal was welcomed, if only we will arise and go to him. The difficulty is that we do not believe him—our bad conscience hinders us—and to overcome our unbelief he gave us the strongest assurance of his love, in that Christ died for us while we were yet enemies of God. This assurance is the atonement, which means the reconciliation of our heart to God: and there is no other atonement for sin.

You will notice that our Lord looks at the matter

in various ways. In two of these parables sin is likened to debt, but in the third to the prodigal's wilfulness, and elsewhere he likens it to a captivity from which we needed to be set free. This is important, for it shews that while sin is like all of them, it is not exactly like any of them, so that we shall go wrong if we take for granted that it is. This indeed is the way most of the mistakes have been made. For example, sin is like a captivity, because it is a miserable bondage; and Christ has ransomed us from it. But we get into difficulties when we ask who received the ransom. Some said Satan, some said the Father: and both answers are downright immoral. One makes the devil a god; the other makes God a devil. Clearly the point of the matter is that the ransom has delivered us, and that it cost Christ unspeakable shame and suffering: and this is all. Our Lord likens sin first to one thing, then to another, not only because no one thing can teach us all that we need to know, but because there is no one thing which will not lead us wrong if we refuse to look at other things also.

Take one famous theory of past ages. Our great archbishop Anselm likened sin to debt. We owe God perfect obedience, and plainly cannot pay it: and even if we could pay it from this day onward, there would still be a debt from the past. Yet it must be paid somehow, said he, before God can justly forgive us. It must be paid by man; yet only God is able to pay such a debt as that. The only



way out of the difficulty was for God to become man. So the Son of God became man and paid perfect obedience, and paid it for us: so now we are clear of our debt, and our Father is free to love us again.

Anselm was a very great thinker: yet here he would have done better if he had set aside his Roman law, and read the parables like a little child. There are many difficulties in his theory; but there is one clear mistake which I wish to set before you. He takes for granted that the debt must somehow be paid—that God would do wrong if he forgave us before somebody or other had paid it. But why so? Is free forgiveness positively wrong? Yes, says he. It is admirable no doubt for ourselves; but God is a great King whose glory we have despised, so that he must have satisfaction before he can forgive. But is it positively wrong for an earthly king to give a free pardon to rebels? On the contrary, they are not punished simply because they have done wrong, but to prevent them and others from rebelling again, so that the wrong would be in refusing a free pardon, if there were clearly no risk of a new rebellion. Even if there were some risk, it might still be wise to issue a free pardon which would win over some of the rebels and leave the rest without excuse. Far more must the King of kings be a gracious Lord whose only glory is the welfare of his creatures, more willing to grant than we to ask forgiveness.

At all events, in all three parables the forgiveness is free. The man is no doubt expected to behave well in the future; but no satisfaction is required for the past. He asks forgiveness, and receives it. When the two debtors had nothing to pay, the creditor freely forgave them both: he did not take the satisfaction of putting them in prison. The unmerciful servant was forgiven his ten thousand talents, and would have heard no more of them if he had not so abominably misbehaved himself. The prodigal indeed does think of satisfaction for the past when he proposes to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But this is the one thing he does not say. He gets through his confession. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son"—but there he stops. He does not add, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," because he knows now that even if he is an unworthy son, he has never lost a son's place in his father's heart. So here again for the third time forgiveness is free. Had it been so recorded only once, we might have thought it one of the small things we must not make too much of: but when our Lord makes all the three great parables turn on free forgiveness, we cannot go wrong in thinking it the chief thing he wants to teach us.

So it is. The news from heaven which we call the Gospel is the news of free forgiveness—not that God will some day forgive us if we do such and such good works, but that he has forgiven us in Christ already,

and in that forgiveness given us power to do the good works. From one end of the New Testament to the other, you will find no hint that God requires any sort of satisfaction for the past. Only confess your sin to him and have done with it, and you shall hear no more of it from him.

If Wesleyans or Salvation Army men or any others have done a good work on the face of the earth, they have done it only by preaching this gospel of forgiveness, that Christ has loosed us from our sins. The guilt of the past is done away, and in thankfulness to him is power for the future, that sin may have no more dominion over us. This is the Gospel of Christ; and his mighty power is in it, whoever preaches it; and anything else is another gospel which is not another, but no gospel at all. A gospel of terror is the devil's gospel, whoever preaches it. The thunderings and lightnings of almighty power may crush the sinner's courage, and drive him to all sorts of superstition; but no man ever sinned a sin the less for fear of hell. Out of the heart are the issues of life: and nothing can reach the sinner's heart but the mighty power of free forgiveness, which humbles him to the dust with shame, but only to lift him on his feet again and send him on his way rejoicing, with the heavy burden loosed, the secret cancer cured. From below the reach of terror, below the reach of shame itself, springs the bounding joy of life restored, the joy of sin forgiven, the joy of thankfulness in Christ, the joy of life eternal here on earth. Let

him that will make trial, and see that the Lord is good,

Who forgiveth all thy sin :

and healeth all thine infirmities ;

Who saveth thy life from destruction :

and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness.



**XXVII.**  
**SONS OF GOD.**

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”—JOHN i. 11, 12.

## XXVII.

### SONS OF GOD.

**W**HEN is it that we become children of God? Is it when we are born? or when we are baptized? or when we come to Christ by faith? Here are three opinions which have all been widely held in Christendom: and I believe that each of them is perfectly true in its own sense, so that each of them becomes false when it is used to deny the others.

First, however, let us make sure what we mean by sons of God. Here we must be careful, for the Son of God who is God as well as man, is a son of God as well as we, for he is not ashamed to call us brethren. Now one of the things I learned from Athanasius is that sonship does not consist in coming after a father, which in the case of the Son of God would be absurd, but in likeness to a father—that a son is the image of his father, and not a being of a different kind. A house or a table may be a man's handiwork; but only a child can be his living likeness. In the same way, a son of God is like God, and he that is like God is a son of God.

Now likeness is a question of more or less, for one thing may be very like another, or only a little like



it. Christ alone is perfectly like God : we sinners are very imperfectly like him, though some of us are more like him than others, and no man is entirely unlike him. If the ripest saint is likest God, however short he comes of Christ's majestic sinlessness, yet sometimes the vilest of sinners will give us flashes of glorious unselfishness which tell us that the Father of Spirits has not disowned him. Again, a son may confess his sonship and behave as a good son should ; or he may throw away his birthright, and even treat his father as an enemy. And though God will not disown his fatherhood or slack his loving care, he may please to give us formal assurance that he will always welcome sinners as children when they come back to him.

Thus we are children of God by birth, in the sense that God made us in his own image, and that sin has not entirely destroyed that image, though it has made us disobedient children who throw away their birthright and belie their sonship. Again, we are made children of God in Baptism, in the sense that we there confess our sonship and promise to be what God's children should be, while he owns us for his children and gives us formal promise of a father's welcome whenever we come to him. Yet again, we become children of God when we come to Christ by faith, in the sense that we then give up our disobedience and take up our place as children of God. But we are not made children of God in Baptism or by coming to Christ, in the sense that we were not

God's children before. Neither are we made children of God by birth or by coming to Christ, in the sense that Baptism is an empty ceremony. Nor yet do we become children of God by birth or in Baptism, in the sense that we can have life without coming to Christ by faith.

Now which of these three mistakes is most dangerous in our time? I think the first. Though there are plenty of Christians who will not come to Christ, few of them will openly deny that they need to come; and though there are some who undervalue Baptism, the present fashion leans more to a superstitious reliance on the outward ceremony. But great parties are agreed in denying that we are born sons of God. One recognizes God's promises in Baptism, and makes that the beginning of sonship; the other sees that Baptism does not always make us like God, and allows no sonship till we come to Christ by faith. Scripture cries out against them both.

My thoughts were drawn this way by a sermon on our text, which argued that those who have not received power to become sons of God cannot be sons already. This was plausible; but I cannot think it sound. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." Who are his own? The word is only found again in the solemn words that "Jesus having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." These were no strangers or hired servants, but the men nearest his heart, the friends who had continued with him in his tempta-

tions, who were as his mother and his brethren. So "his own" in our text must be very near to God: and as they are plainly no friends, I conclude that they are disobedient children. But to as many as received him he gave power—not here strength or capacity—but lawful authority—to become sons of God. He rather openly declared them sons than actually made them sons.

Some therefore were already sons of God before they received that authority; and nothing is said of the rest. Our text does not compel us to deny that we are all born sons of God; and other passages seem to prove it beyond reasonable doubt. Take some samples. Take our Lord's parable of the Prodigal—confessedly the most finished portrait of the sinner he ever drew. The point of the story is not that the prodigal was a stranger who became a son on his return, but that he was always a son, though a wilful and unworthy son: and the comparison on which the whole parable turns cannot be misleading. Take St. Paul at Athens, speaking to heathens, and frankly accepting the heathen poet's words, For we are also his offspring. Take the writer to the Hebrews, who speaks of "many sons" of God: and what makes them sons? Not Baptism, not faith in him who sanctifieth them, but the fact that he and they are all of one Father. "Forasmuch then as the children share in blood and flesh, he also likewise partook of the same." That is, the Son of God was not made man that he might make us

children of God, but because we were already children, and needed to be freed from the slavery of fear which sin had brought upon us before the eternal purpose could be taken up again where sin had interrupted it. And God's eternal purpose for us is something more than innocence or paradise regained. Further and further on the far horizon flits our goal of sinlessness, to those who strive and fall, and strive again through this life's weakness and humiliation: yet it is no more than the starting-point of that life's evergrowing fulness. Little thinks the sinner of the glory and honour of the royal birthright he throws away by sin—of the mystery of the eternal counsel, that children of men should be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, and rulers of the world to come.

Through Christ our Saviour's death and resurrection we receive not sonship for the first time, but assurance that we are sons, and power to turn from disobedience to faith. That sonship is just as much Christ's work as our salvation, for by him we were made in the image of God. Sin has not annulled the old Gospel of Genesis, and Christ has not repealed it. God's first word concerning man remains the ground of all Christian teaching. Our message is not that the sinner is no child of his, and needs to become one, but that he is an unworthy child, and needs to turn away from his wickedness and save his life alive. Of all this God gave us full assurance from heaven, in that he gave his Son for the sin of the world to taste of death for every man—not for the baptized or for

the elect, but for every man from the saintliest of saints to the vilest of the vile, for they are all children of God on whom he sends the sunshine and the rain of heaven.

God calls you not by words of mine or other words alone, but by every thought of righteousness and peace and joy that he has ever given you—not to become his children, as if he counted you strangers, but to turn away from disobedience, to take up the forgiveness already bestowed in Christ, and in the strength of thankfulness to walk worthy of your calling, and to rejoice for ever in our Father's love. Is this too hard? Is it more than flesh and blood can do? "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." His grace is sufficient. If any of you lack strength, let him ask help of Christ in time of need, and he shall not ask in vain from him who is able to save to the uttermost every one that cometh to God through him.

**XXVIII.**  
**FIRST THE BLADE.**

“First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”—MARK iv. 28.

## XXVIII.

### FIRST THE BLADE.<sup>1</sup>

THE parable of the seed growing silently is little noticed, because it is recorded only by St. Mark : but it is as full of meaning as the more familiar parables of the Sower or the Prodigal.

As our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven to a corn of wheat which is cast into the ground, we will see how that seed grows. In the first place, it does grow. Its nature is to grow ; and though bad weather may keep it back for awhile, it will grow if it gets into the soil, and that silently and steadily. The farmer sleeps, and does his day's work, and sleeps again ; but the seed is growing all the while. How it grows he cannot tell, for life is a mystery, and Science has not found out the secret even of a grass like that. In the next place, the order of growth is fixed—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Everything in its own time and order : you never saw the fruit before the flower, or the harvest in winter. Then again it grows by taking into itself particles of matter. It feeds on the earth below, and drinks the water of the rain of heaven .

<sup>1</sup> Ridley Hall, Cambridge, February 27, 1903.



from above; and without that water it could take up nothing from the soil. Earth and heaven join to feed it; but the power of life which turns the soil and the rain into leaves and stem and fruit baffles all our efforts to discover it.

There is yet another point which our Lord does not mention here, though he does elsewhere. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. And St. Paul, That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and then he reminds us that what rises from the earth is not the seed we sow, but a plant whose glory we could not have discovered from the seed. Such a body God hath given it, according to its kind.

To this growth our Lord likens the kingdom of heaven. Now the kingdom of heaven is not a thing that can be seen like the kingdom of England. It is wider and older than any church, wider than all the churches put together. It is as wide and as old as the world, for his kingdom ruleth over all. The ground was preparing through unmeasured ages, the seed was sown when the first man became a living soul, and the harvest shall not be fully gathered in till there is no more death. The kingdom stands for God's guiding of all men in all ages before and after Christ: and nothing less can be the meaning of that Catholic Church which we confess to be one. There is no true unity except in Christ: yet every one on the face of the earth who does a work of love

is so far one in Christ with us, even though he never heard Christ's name ; for Christ's grace is with him.

Now let us trace the growth of the kingdom of heaven in the world. First, it does grow. It is like the flowing tide : a wave or two may not tell you much, but presently you will see it washing higher up the rocks. So a generation or two may not tell you much, but in history you will see the rising tide beyond mistake. If the world is far enough yet from being genuinely Christian, and some of its greatest states even now are little better than robbers on the watch, it has without question grown more Christian from age to age. There is more good in it now, and generally good of a higher tone and with a greater influence. Nobody who knows any history can wish to go back to the thirteenth century, or even to the first. Then again it grows in order—first the natural, then the spiritual ; first the commands of a law, then the freedom of a gospel ; first the crude ideas we get from single texts, then the wider and worthier thoughts we learn by comparing texts with each other, with the general drift of Scripture, and with God's other words in science and history, in life and conscience. When once the wickedness of a thing, say slavery, is clearly seen, it stands rebuked for ever. Again, the kingdom grows silently, like the corn. It comes not in the noise of war and strife, as if the wrath of man could work the righteousness of God ; nor in the debates of parliaments and church councils,

in the drawing up of laws and creeds and ordering of rites and ceremonies, as if it were a work of human wisdom. It comes—it is ever coming—whenever God gives us a loftier view of truth, a worthier idea of duty, a nobler work of service to our fellow-men. It comes, but no man knoweth how it comes, for life is always a mystery. Yet again, it grows like the corn, by feeding on things of the earth. It is the kingdom, not the visible church, which takes into itself the kingdoms of men, their laws and societies, and grows by transforming them: yet it would have no power to transform them if it were not also drinking water of that rain of heaven which makes the wilderness of sin to rejoice, and its desert places to flourish like the garden of the Lord.

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The kingdom of God in our own hearts is like the corn again. First, it grows. It may fall by the wayside or on stony ground or be choked among thorns; but its nature is to grow, and grow it will in every good and faithful heart. But all things in order, like the corn. First that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. The warfare of life must come before the crown of victory, the bitterness of repentance before the joys of love divine, the child-like enthusiasms of the new believer before the chastened graces of the ripened man of God. Our leader learned obedience from the things he suffered,

and we must let patience have her perfect work before we can enter into the royal rest of God. Yet again, the kingdom grows in silence, like the corn. It comes not in the heroic moments of life, but in the weary times of patient work and waiting; not in the rioting of spiritual excess, but in the quiet round of common duties, for these are the sacrifices with which God is well pleased. We sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed grows up, we know not how. The unbidden thoughts of good which stir our hearts come to us like strangers from another world—so bright they seem, so far above our sordid selves. The life within us is no conquest of our own, but the gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. How it grows is more than we know: all that we can do is to cherish it with reverent and loving care. Yet again, the kingdom grows by taking up the things of earth—our relations and friends, our business and amusements, and the hopes and fears, and cares and joys that come from them. The richer our earthly life in these things, the richer the material for our heavenly life to feed upon.

“All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
Whatever stirs our mortal frame;  
They are but ministers of Love,  
And feed his sacred flame.”

If this is true of the earthly love which springs from the earth and looks up to heaven, still truer is it of the love divine which comes down to us from heaven. On the things of earth the life of heaven feeds; and

it can no more do without them than the seed can do without the soil. Such an escape from them as the monk dreams of would only be into a region where goodness is impossible. Yet neither can we transform the things of earth unless we drink the water of the rain of heaven—that rain which cometh down out of heaven to become in us a spring of water leaping up to life eternal.

Yet another likeness. Through death unto life is the law of the spiritual world as well as of the natural. Here again the kingdom of heaven is like the corn of wheat which bears no fruit except it die. Look first at nations. The Three Hundred in the pass gave new life to Greece, and the rout of Cannæ lifted Rome to the throne of the world. As with nations, so with churches. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, and the fires of Smithfield are still the candle of the Lord in England. Them that scorn them God will judge; for that scorn bears witness that they are the children of the men who slew the Just. As with churches, so with men—through death unto life. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The old man in us which sinned must surely die, if we are to put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. The old things are passed away; behold, they are become new: but they must pass through the gate of death before they can return, still natural desires and earthly things, but natural desires and earthly things transfigured by the powers of the other world,

and resplendent with the glory of the love of God. This is the word of Christ our Lord—his only word repeated with fourfold emphasis by all the four Evangelists—He that loveth his life is destroying it; and he that hateth his life in this world, to life eternal shall he keep it.

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